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THE DECLINE OF THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

Volume Two

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THE DECLINE OF THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

Volume Two

BY

ALEXANDER CLARENCE FLICK, Ph.D., Litt.D., Ll.D.

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PART III

THE GREAT REFORM COUNCILS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

CHAPTER XII

The Council of Pisa

76. *Causes for Calling the Council*

THE fundamental cause for calling the Council of Pisa in 1409 and the Council of Constance in 1414 was to heal the Great Schism, which had divided all of Western Europe, both politically and ecclesiastically into hostile and irreconcilable camps, by which the very foundations of Papal authority were undermined and jeopardized. By 1409 the disgraceful schism had afflicted Western Christendom for thirty-one years, and none of the means employed to end it had succeeded. Compromise or arbitration had never been seriously attempted. The suggestion of the surrender of one, or both claimants, had failed lamentably because of the obstinacy of the rival Popes, each equally convinced of his constitutional rights. The intervention of princes and armies had been without results. The situation was deplorably desperate. Hence the demand from all parties and all classes, that some effective means be taken to heal the breach and thus restore unity to the Church and peace to Europe, finally compelled the two colleges of cardinals to desert their rival leaders and to call the Council of Pisa.

A second general cause for summoning a universal council was the widespread recognition of the necessity for a thoroughgoing reformation. Many, if indeed not all, of the evils and abuses against which the various reform movements, and particularly the two great Popes, Gregory VII and Innocent III, had so valiantly struggled, were continued while numerous new evils of all sorts had appeared during the Babylonian Captivity and the Great Schism. Hence arose an irresistible cry on all sides for a council representing Christendom to purify the Church from top to bottom. This cause lay behind not only Pisa and Constance, but likewise Basel in 1431.

A third cause was the desire to deal in some effective manner with heresy which, during the period of the schism, had become widespread and aggressive, even threatening the creation of national Churches, particularly in England under Wiclif and the Lollards, and in Bohemia under Huss.[1] This cause was of especial potency in convening the councils of Constance and Basel.

77. *Historical Significance of the Councils*

To the historical student, these reform councils are the most valuable reflectors of opinions and convictions regarding (1) the Church, its origin, growth, organization, and constitution, the Pope, clergy, laity, reforms, and heresy; (2) the State, its relation to the Church, its powers and duties, and international relations; (3) social, economic, and industrial conditions; and (4) the intellectual status of Western Europe.

78. *The Revolutionary Conception of the Powers of a Universal Council*

The defenders of the Papal prerogatives had clearly elaborated the constitutional relationship between a universal council and the supreme Pontiff of the Church. According to this canonical view (1) the Pope alone could summon a general council; (2) the Pope, or his representative, presided over it; and (3) the Pope's approval was essential to the validity of its acts. This procedure certainly had been followed in the four oecumenical councils held in the Western Church since the ninth century.[2] Both constitutional law and recognized precedent were therefore with the champions of Papal supremacy at the opening of the fifteenth century.

But the Babylonian Captivity and the Great Schism had given rise to a revolutionary conception of the powers of a universal council, called now by historians the conciliar theory. Gelnhausen was its creator; and Langenstein, D'Ailly, and Gerson were its supporters and elaborators. The schism in the Church made it impossible for either pretending Pope to obtain a council which would represent the whole Church. Hence these upholders of the conciliar theory maintained that the Church was the Church without even the presence of the Pope; that in the event of dire need the council could be called without the Pope's consent, or even against his protest; that the general council representing the whole Church was the supreme law-making power of the Church and its edicts were valid without the Pope's consent; that the council had the power to legislate in reference to the Papacy itself and the Pope would be compelled to obey such law; and that the council had authority to reform the Church and to crush heresy without the Pope's approval. The wide acceptance of the conciliar theory in the Latin Church meant, to be sure, the reversal of a policy of a thousand years and the actual practice of six centuries. Such a radical departure from the conception of Papal power held by Gregory VII, Innocent III, and Boniface VIII must have caused those mighty occupants of Peter's chair to turn over in their graves. Logically this doctrine made the council alone the source of infallibility.

---

[1] National Churches were also suggested for France and Germany.

[2] Universal councils had been held in 1123 under Calixtus II; 1139 under Innocent II; 1179 under Alexander III; and 1215 under Innocent III. See Pastor, i, 180–181.

In the French provincial synod of Aix, 1st January, 1409, Peter d'Ailly set forth a series of theses covering the subject in which he held (1) that Christ alone is head of the Church; (2) that the universal unity of the Church is in Christ and not in the Pope; (3) that the unity of the Church remains in the absence of the Pope; (4) that every member of the Church is bound to help preserve its unity; and (5) that, consequently, in case of incurable schism, or Papal vacancy, or an insane or heretical Pontiff, the Church can, and must, call a council to preserve its unity.[1]

Gerson, on 29th January, 1409, wrote his famous tract *On the Unity of the Church*,[2] in which he affirmed: "If the vicar of Christ be corporally or civilly dead, then the Church, to provide itself with a head, has the right to assemble in a general council, not only by the authority of the cardinals, but by the aid and support of every Christian prince."

79. *How the Council of Pisa was Called*

A general survey of Latin Christendom in 1408 reveals the fact quite clearly that all Western Europe—rulers, clergy, and people—was convinced that the best means of healing the schism was through a general council, grounded on the theory advanced by these revolutionary ecclesiastical leaders.[1] The two colleges of cardinals, apparently guided by the same belief, after reunion and reconciliation, called a general council to meet at Pisa for March, 1409, and summoned both Popes to join them in attending it. The pleas of ecclesiastical necessity and the welfare of European Christian civilization outweighed all consideration of canon law and Papal prerogative.[2] Universities like Paris, Bologna, and Florence; cities like Venice, Florence, Siena, Rimini, and Genoa; kings and emperors; canon lawyers like Francis de Zabarella of Padua and Peter de Ancora of Bologna; theologians like D'Ailly and Gerson; cardinals like Corsini, Pedro Tenorio, Peter Blau, and Guido de Malesset, were willing to go to the extent of overthrowing the whole canon law, so far as it upheld the Pope's authority over councils, for the sake of realizing Christian unity.[3] In this way the Schism had forced men to look facts in the face, to clear their minds of many notions which, by their very age, had come to be asserted as axiomatic, and boldly to devise new methods and new theories to meet new conditions. Thus the revolutionary theory was born out of the needs of the time.[4] Consequently all attempt to decide between the claims of the two Popes was abandoned in the new problem absorbing the attention of Christendom.

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[1] Loserth, *Gesch. des spät. Mittelaltera*, 1197–1492, 446.

[2] Cf. Schwab, *Gerson*, 223 ff.

80. *Attendance and Composition*

A dignified and widely representative body constituted the council which met at Pisa in the cathedral on the feast of the Annunciation on 25th March, 1409, and continued in session until 7th August of the same year. The total attendance consisted of 24 cardinals,[5] the 4 patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Venice; 10 archbishops[6] and 13 more by proxy; 69 bishops and 82 by proxy; 87 mitred abbots and 200 by proxy; 60 priors; 109 representatives of chapters, collegiate and cathedral; 4 generals of religious orders—the Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, and Augustinians; the Grand Master of the Hospitallers and the General of the Teutonic Knights; 11 deputations from universities—Paris, Bologna, Oxford, Cambridge, Montpellier, Toulouse, Angers, Vienna, Cracow, Prague, and Cologne[1]; 6 ambassadors from kings and 7 deputies from dukes and princes; 123 doctors of theology; and 200 doctors of civil and canon law.[2] Not for two centuries had Latin Christendom witnessed such a convocation of intellectual, ecclesiastical, and civil powers to solve problems confronting the Church. These leaders of European civilization fully realized both the weight and the significance of the momentuous questions awaiting their decision. The representation of the universities of Europe was a new and a significant element in the Council of Pisa.[3] Peter d'Ailly was the most prominent member present, although he does not seem to have played an important rôle. The most conspicuous leader of the unionists was Simon Cramont. The most active man was Cardinal Cossa, who worked incessantly for his own aggrandizement, had his candidate made Pope, succeeded him in the Papal chair and later was himself deposed by the Council of Constance. The Council seems to have been under Burgundian influence.[4] By June over 500 ecclesiastics [5] were present, and of those in attendance about 200 were Frenchmen.[6]

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[1] Schwab, 122–3, gives the authorities.

[2] Lenfant, *Hist. du Concile de Pisa*, i,, 238, 245, 246 (4th ed.).

[3] Ib., 245, 246.

[4] Krüger, ii, § 45, 209 (new ed. 1912).

[5] There were 26 cardinals in the two colleges: 14 Roman and 12 Avignon. One remained with Gregory XII and three with Benedict XIII. On the opening day only 16 cardinals—9 Italians and 7 French—were present. Later 8 more, including the one with Gregory and one with Benedict, joined the council, making 24. Souchon, ii, 41.

[6] Out of the 10, 7 were French. Lenfant, i, 352.

81. *Organization*

The organization of the Council was of course the first important matter to receive attention. This occurred on 26th March, because the first day had been given up to a long procession of the members then assembled from the monastery of St Michele through the streets to the cathedral, where the opening services were held.[7] On the second day the council assembled in the long nave of the cathedral for mass, after which the Cardinal of Milan preached a sermon "about the guilt of both Popes and the necessity of a general council." [8]

---

[1] Schwab, 223.

[2] For attendance compare Mansi, Raynaldus, and D'Archery, with varying lists.

[3] Schwab, 223.

[4] Bess, *Studien*, 92.

[5] Finke, *Forsch.*, 283.

[6] Valois, *France et le grant schisme*, iv, 77.

[7] For the seating of the Council, Mansi, xxvii, 116; *Religieux*, iv, 208.

[8] Loserth, 446.

The assembly on their knees then offered silent prayer, after which followed a Litany, and the impressive old hymn "*Veni Creator*".[1] The council then proceeded to elect its officers. The venerable cardinal of Poictiers, who was the only cardinal created before the Schism began, was chosen president. He presided over the council until the sixth session, when the Patriarch of Alexandria took the chair and held it until Alexander V was chosen Pope and thereby became the head of the council.[2] After listening to a reading of the profession of faith by the Archbishop of Pisa, which ended with a declaration that "every heretic or schismatic must share with the devil and his angels the burning of eternal fire, unless before the end of this life he be restored to the Catholic Church", the council proceeded to elect the other officers: 6 notaries, 4 proctors, 2 advocates, 2 marshals, auditors, and promoters, who took the customary oath of office. On unimportant matters it seems that all persons present, lay and clerical, voted,[3] but on important matters only bishops, abbots, and the lower prelates were given a decisive vote.[4] Doctors of theology apparently had only a consultative vote, at least on fundamental questions. Even in the Council of Pisa it seems that an effort was made to cast a vote by nations for both the English [5] and the French representatives [6] were instructed to vote together.

82. *Attempts to heal the Schism*

After the completion of the organization of the council, one of the advocates, Simon of Perugia, called for the reading of the summons addressed to the two schismatic Popes. Thereupon he asked that steps be taken to ascertain whether "Benefictus" and "Errorius" had not been guilty of contumacy in failing to appear in accordance with the summons. Two of the cardinals, accompanied by an archbishop, a bishop, and several officials went out on the cathedral steps and in a loud voice called upon the two Popes to present themselves. No response. Then they shouted again: "Has anyone been appointed to represent them?" Silence again. The gaping crowd was asked whether they had seen any signs of the two Popes in the city. After that they solemnly returned, and informed the council that no one had responded to their summons. Consequently the advocate demanded that both Pontiffs should be declared contumacious. This farcical ceremony was repeated on three successive days, and the offenders were given until 15th April to make their appearance. The Popes were declared contumacious on 30th March at the third session, and the four cardinals still absent, one with Gregory and three with Benedict, were ordered to appear at the fourth session which was fixed for 15th April.[1]

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[1] Mansi, xxvii, 117.

[2] Mansi, xxvii, 116 ff., 364; Hefele, vi, 993; Stuhr, *Die Org. u. Geschäftsord. des P. u. K. Konzils.* Schwerin, *Rechtsgesch.*, Leipzig, 1912, has an able discussion of the presidency.

[3] Mansi, xxvii, 122, 123, 126, 128, 365, 396, 395.

[4] Ib., iii, 123, 117, 126. Raumer, *Hist. Taschenbuch*, x, 30, asserts that all spiritual representatives from bishops to bachelors of theology voted on all questions, but Hinschius, iii, 365, opposes this idea and holds that doctors had only a consultative vote.

[5] Mansi, xxvi, 1139, 1219; xxvii, 364.

[6] Stuhr, 27; Martène et Durand, vii, 1117.

Meanwhile the council sought to settle definitely its authority to end the schism. The Papal monarchy had so completely absorbed the earlier powers of the general council of the Church that there was no certainty as to how the council could legally proceed in getting rid of the two claimants to the Papal office. Cardinal Cossa had the University of Bologna express its opinion on the question at issue. It asserted that schism degenerates into heresy; that a Pope elected under oath to crush a schism, if he failed, fostered heresy; and that his subjects could then withdraw their support and select a true Pope who would really extirpate the schism. If the cardinals refused to call a council to meet the situation, provincial synods and princes were justified in taking the initiative. All this advice was rather vague, however, and it was left to the French theologians, D'Ailly and Gerson, to develop the conciliar movement to its logical end. They boldly asserted that the council had full authority, in the interest of unity, to depose the two schismatic Popes and to elect a new Pope acceptable to the entire Church.[2]

On 10th April Charles Malatesta, the protector of Gregory XII, appeared at Pisa to induce the council to change its place of meeting. The cardinals tried to win him over and urged him to send Gregory to Pisa, but he refused to recognize any council held on territory belonging to his enemy, Florence. The council remained firm and through a committee of the cardinals set forth 40 reasons why no compromise could be made with Gregory.

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[1] Mansi, xxvii, 118–21; Hefele, vi, 995–6.

[2] Gerson's famous pamphlet, *De auferibilitate papae ab ecclesia*, was written while the council was in session. Schwab, 250 ff.; Kitts, 336.

In the fourth session on 15th April, a special embassy of five representatives from King Ruprecht of Germany presented 24 propositions[1] in which the jurisdiction of the Council of Pisa was denied, in Gregory's interest, but this opposition disappeared with the departure of the embassy without waiting for an answer.[2]

At the fifth session, held on 24th April, an advocate read a statement three hours long, drawn up by the cardinals. which reviewed the history of the Schism and in 38 articles accused the two Popes as guilty of falsehood, perjury, obstinacy, and schism.[3] The council then appointed commissioners representing the various nations, to proceed with the trial of the two Popes. Witnesses were called and evidence was taken as to the truth of the 38 charges.

Peter de Ancorano, a professor of law in the University of Bologna, conducted the case against the schismatic Pontiffs. He argued that they were guilty of perpetuating schism in the Church and hence had thereby forfeited their right to summon a council. Under the circumstances the initiative rested with the reunited college of cardinals and the necessities of the case forced them to act. Since the Schism made the Church headless, the cardinals, as the legal administrators of the Papacy, were called upon to take such action as the circumstances required to provide the Church with a true Pope.[4]

Peter Plaoul, of the University of Paris, delivered an address from *Hosea* i, 11, on the text : "and the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together and shall appoint themselves one head." Very clearly he restated what had been the view of the French leaders for some years, namely, that the universal council was the sovereign power in the Church, and hence superior to the Pope. From this premise it followed, of course, that the council, representing the whole Church, could pass judgment on the rival claimants to Papal power, depose them if necessary for the welfare of the Church, and elect a new Pope. The eminent canonist, Zabarella, later cardinal, took the same view.

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[1] Mansi, xxvii, 123, 362.

[2] Hefele-Knöpfler, vi, 999 ; Loserth, 447 ; Christophe, iii, 306 ; Mansi, xxvii, 367–94 gives the answer of the committee appointed to reply to the 24 propositions.

[3] Raynaldus, 1409, § 47–70 ; Mansi, xxvi, 1195–1219 ; Souchon, ii, 49, n. 2 asserts that the French cardinals wrote arts. 1–8, 11, 18, 21, 29, and 32 ; the Italian cardinals arts. 10, 12–17, 19, 20, 25–28, and 35 ; and the whole college wrote the rest.

[4] Hefele, vi, 1013–16.

At the eighth session on 10th May the advocate demanded a decree asserting that the reunion of the two colleges had been regularly and canonically effected. Notwithstanding some opposition, the council voted that inasmuch as both Popes had refused to bring union to the Church by abdication, it was both lawful and obligatory for every one to withdraw allegiance from the two Popes. The president, the Patriarch of Alexandria, then read a decree of the council, in accordance with the advocate's request, approving the union of the two colleges, and declaring that the council represented the universal Church and possessed power to restore unity to the Church.[1] The cardinals accepted this decree.

The powers of the commissioners appointed to examine witnesses to prove the truth of the 38 articles against the Popes were extended so as to enable them to expedite the trial. In the tenth and eleventh sessions, on 22nd and 23rd May, the articles against the two schismatic Popes were again read and the truth of the charges attested by the Archbishop of Pisa, who summed up the case by mentioning the number of witnesses, 84 in all, whose testimony established the truth of each separate charge. At the twelfth session on 25th May both Popes were pronounced guilty of contumacy, and the charges against them were declared to be notoriously true.[2] Three days later 120 doctors of theology testified that, in their judgment, the two Popes were schismatics and heretics, and as such should be excommunicated and deprived of their rights. On 1st June the Archbishop of Pisa reviewed all the evidence substantiating the charges made in the trial against the two Pontiffs. The council was now ready to render its decision.

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[1] The council declared itself to be " a general council representing the whole universal Catholic Church and lawfully and reasonably called together ". Mansi, xxvii, 366 ; Raynaldus, anno, 1409, sec. 71 ; Thatcher and McNeal, § 169 ; Ogg, 392.

[2] Raynaldus, 1409, No. 47.

Finally, in the fifteenth session on 5th June, the president of the council, the Patriarch of Alexandria, Simon Cramaud from the cathedral steps, read to the assembled crowd amid joyful applause the sentence of deposition against the two Popes:

"Benedict XIII and Gregory XII are recognized as schismatics, the approvers and makers of schism, notorious heretics, guilty of perjury and violation of solemn promises, and openly scandalizing the universal Church. In consequence they are declared unworthy of the sovereign Pontificate, and are *ipso facto* deposed from their functions and dignities, and even driven out of the Church. It is forbidden them henceforward to consider themselves to be sovereign Pontiffs, and all proceedings and promotions made by them are annulled. The Holy See is declared vacant and the faithful are set free from their promise of obedience." [1]

The magistrates of Pisa proclaimed the news throughout the city with trumpets and ordered a general holiday. The *Te Deum* was sung in the cathedral and the cathedral bells proclaimed the glad tidings to the Christian world. Village bells took up the peal so that within four hours the news was received in Florence.[2] Members of the council were forbidden to depart until they had signed the decree of deposition. At the same session the Cardinal of Chalant, who had deserted Benedict, was allowed in silence to take his seat in the council. Everybody in Pisa thought that at last the Schism had been ended, and the next day the event was celebrated by a solemn procession in honour of the festival of *Corpus Christi*.

The supporters of the conciliar theory of ecclesiastical government had to all outward appearances won a notable victory. A general council had been called without Papal authority and all Europe had responded to the summons. For the first time in Church history this council usurped sovereign power and set its authority up as superior to that of the Pope. It assumed a competency to pass judgment on the two schismatic Popes and to depose them. In keeping with that revolutionary assumption it imposed "a sentence unexampled in the history of the Church". Necessity had forced the council, acting in remarkable unanimity, to assume the prerogatives of the highest earthly tribunal, and not only to sit in judgment on the Popes but to depose them.

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[1] Mansi, xxvi, 1147, 1225 sqq.; Raynaldus, 1409, No. 71; Archery, i, 847; Hefele, vi, 1025; Kitts, 365.

[2] Martène-Durand, *Amp. Coll.*, vii, 1096.

Benedict XIII on 15th June, 1408, had withdrawn to Perpignan, a fortress at the foot of the Pyrenees, six miles from the Mediterranean, where he called a council to meet on 1st November, 1408. Of the 120 prelates in attendance nearly all were from Spain. The council adjourned on 26th March, 1409, after creating a commission of seven to go to Pisa in order to help heal the schism in the interest of their candidate. The deputation reached Pisa on 14th June after the Popes had been deposed and were treated with such scant courtesy that they soon left the city in fear of their lives, to return to their leader. Gregory XII had taken refuge in Rimini in November, 1408. To offset the Council of Pisa he had called a council to meet at Whitsuntide, 1409, either at Aquileia or Ravenna. The attendance was very small at first, but later on Ruprecht and Ladislaus sent deputies. Little was accomplished beyond stoutly upholding the claims of their master and sending nuncios to all the European kingdoms to win support.

The election of a new Pope was the next question before the council and by no means an easy one to settle. Who should elect the new Pope, the council, or the college of cardinals, or the two combined? It certainly would have been a logical exercise of that revolutionary assumption of sovereign power which the council had employed in deposing the two Popes, had it proceeded to the election of a new Pope. However, since the college of cardinals had cooperated so willingly in calling the council, and in sanctioning its acts, the council was not averse to continuing the old custom, which put the election of a Pope entirely in the hands of the college. At the same time the fact must not be lost sight of that the cardinals were extremely jealous of their prerogatives and were prepared to insist upon their canonical right to choose a new Pontiff. To quiet the fears of the council, the cardinals, on 10th June, had the Archbishop of Pisa read a statement in which they agreed to bind themselves, in case any one of them should be elected Pope, not to dissolve the council until a "due, reasonable and sufficient reform of the Church in head and members, had been brought about."[1] Thereupon the council on 14th June authorized the cardinals to proceed with the election. The city magistrates took an oath to preserve the peace during the conclave which began on 15th June in the archbishop's palace.

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[1] Mansi, xxvi, 1149; Thatcher and McNeal, 328.

The college consisted at this time of 10 cardinals of Benedict's obedience, and 14 of Gregory's.[1] On 26th June the cardinals announced the unanimous election of Peter Philargi, the Cardinal of Milan. He was evidently a compromise candidate, 70 years old, a Greek by birth, with no relatives to embarrass him, a Venetian citizen, and a Franciscan friar. He had studied in Italy, Paris, and Oxford, and was recognized as a great theologian and canonist. He bore a stainless character and had an international reputation as a successful diplomat. He was in the University of Paris when the schism broke out and there upheld the legitimacy of Urban VI. In 1386 he was made bishop of Piacenza and in 1402 Archbishop of Milan. Innocent VII created him cardinal in 1405 and sent him as Papal legate to Lombardy. He was foremost among the advocates of a general council; hence approved of secession, the union of the two colleges of cardinals, and the calling of the Council of Pisa. In that body he was one of the leaders. He preached the opening sermon and presided when the two Popes were deposed.[2] When elected he said: " As a bishop I was rich, as a cardinal poor, and as Pope I am a beggar again."

The new head of Christendom took the name of Alexander V and his election was hailed with great joy. Amid ringing bells and shouts of the people he was carried to the cathedral and enthroned as the supreme Pontiff. Couriers were rushed off to spread the news of the election to all the sovereigns of Europe, from whom he received expressions of lively interest and sympathy.

On 1st July Alexander V preached a sermon before the council from the text: " There shall be one fold and one pastor ", and then had Cardinal Cossa read his decrees which (1) approved of everything that had been done by the cardinals from 3rd May, 1408, to 25th March, 1409; and (2) sanctioned the union of two colleges of cardinals in one legal body.[3] These measures seemed to place his elevation to the Papacy beyond dispute either in law or in fact. On 7th July he was solemnly crowned as the only true Pope of Latin Christendom.[1] The Italians seemed to be particularly pleased at this solution of the destructive schism. Florence and Siena sent embassies to Pisa with complimentary congratulations and the Sienese envoys urged the Pope to hasten to Rome to take up the arduous duties of ruling united Christendom. But Alexander V decided to remain in Pisa during the continuance of the council as its presiding officer.

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[1] Creighton, i, 249.

[2] Nieheim, 320 sqq., gives his early life in detail.

[3] Martène-Durand, *Amp. Coll.*, vii, 1120.

On 10th July the Pope declared null and void, and revoked, all sentences pronounced by either of the two competitors against those who were not of their obedience, or had embraced the neutrality.[2]

83. *Efforts to bring about Reforms*

The next problem before the council was that of reformation. For many years scholars, ecclesiastics, rulers, universities, and local synods had been drawing up lists of evils and abuses the correction of which was imperative, if the Church was to continue to fulfill its highest mission in Europe. It was generally believed that, just as soon as the schism was adjusted, the Council of Pisa would take up the urgent need of reform. In the sixteenth session, on 10th June, a document signed by 19 cardinals was read in which each one promised that in case he was elected Pope, he would not dissolve the council until under its advice the necessary reforms of the whole Church and its states in head and members were carried out in a thorough-going fashion.[3] The cardinals made the same promise, likewise in case an absent cardinal, or any person not at the council, should be chosen Pope. Indeed, while the cardinals were in conclave, the council was urged to proceed with the programme of reformation.[4]

Whether or not the promised reformation would be realized depended upon the will and interest of Alexander V. Immediately after election he declared that he would labour energetically for the purification of the Church. The prelates and proctors of England, France, Germany, Poland, Bohemia, and Provence presented him with a list of grievances, which showed how far the Church had departed from its former power and efficiency as the leader in the Christian faith.[1] The list included the well-known evils of translations, reservations, provisions, destruction of episcopal and chapter patronage, the exaction of first-fruits and tenths, exemptions, the neglect of the jurisdiction of inferior courts, the excessive demands of the Papal camera for money, the complexity of the rules of the Papal chancery, and the alienation of the possessions of the Holy See. To these demands the Pope returned fair answers.

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[1] See Niem, *Schismate*, ch. v, for an account of the ceremony.

[2] Bower, *Hist. of the Popes.*, iii, 168; Mansi, xxvi, 1152, 1253.

[3] Raynaldus, 1409, No. 71; Martène-Durand, vii, 111; Souchon, ii, 56; Loserth, 447; Thatcher and McNeal, § 170.

[4] Souchon, ii, 56.

On 1st July in the twentieth session the Pope advised the appointment of a committee consisting of cardinals and deputies from the various nations to consider the whole problem of reformation.[2] It seems that a committee of four cardinals was named to consider the recommendations of the nations "for the reformation of the entire body of Church officials, particularly in respect to their mode of living".[3] But no further information concerning the action of the committee is available, and probably nothing was done. The 15th of July was fixed as the date for the beginning of the discussion of reforms. The cardinals meanwhile wavered, grew luke-warm over reformation, and shifted the whole responsibility for aggressive action upon the shoulders of Alexander V. His illness was made an excuse for postponing the session for a consideration of reforms from 15th July to the 20th, then to the 24th, and finally to the 27th, at which session the Archbishop of Pisa, in the Pope's name, declared (1) that he renounced all money claims accruing during the Schism up to his election; (2) that he gave up all reservations of the goods of deceased relatives; (3) that he surrendered all claims to the revenues of vacant benefices; and (4) that he requested the cardinals to make a similar surrender of their claims.[4] Then a series of decrees were passed: (1) securing in their benefices and possessions all who adhered to the council; (2) confirming all the acts of the council; and (3) declaring that the Pope would call another general council in April, 1412. In the twenty-third and last session on 7th August a few additional trivial decrees were promulgated: (1) ordering the holding of diocesan and provincial synods and chapters of monks; (2) granting plenary absolution till death to all attendants and the council. And finally in dissolving the council Alexander V solemnly promised to carry out the wish of the council in reforming the Church in head and members.

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[1] Martène-Durand, *Amp. Coll.*, vii, 1124.

[2] Ib., 1105, 1119.

[3] Ib., 1125; Souchon, ii, 84, 85.

[4] All of the cardinals accepted the recommendation except the Cardinals of Albano and Naples. Creighton, i, 252.

A genuine reformation of all the flagrant evils in the Church was such a tremendous task, especially when one reflects that the abuses had persisted so long that they had come to be regarded as in a sense legal and justifiable, and that the members of the college of cardinals and of the council would have been the first to suffer in their incomes, holdings, and manner of living, that it is really no surprise to find the members of the council willing to shift the responsibility for instituting reforms from their shoulders to the cardinals and the Pope; and the cardinals in their turn to the Pope; and the Pope in his turn seeking to silence, to satisfy, and to postpone.[1] It would have taken an intellectual, moral, and physical giant in the Papal chair in 1409 to have led the liberal reform party in the council to a complete victory in the realization of all its hopes. The kind-hearted, easy-going, aged Pontiff had been able to lead the council wisely along the only path that seemed likely to heal the schism, but he was not equal in bodily vigour, spiritual fibre, and capacity for true leadership, under the circumstances and conditions which surrounded him, to guide a successful assault upon the formidable citadel of Mammon so strongly fortified within the Church and so adroitly defended by an army of prelates guilty of a treasonable betrayal of their own highest ideals.[2]

Nicholas Clemanges commented on the failure of the council to inaugurate reforms in these words: "The Council of Pisa deceived the people! The cardinals and greedy men who composed it, led on by their passions and contemptible interests, prevented the reform of the clergy, which all good men wanted. This assembly of knaves at first proceeded to the election of a chief. When the Pope was elected, they exacted that he should ratify the promotions and benefices which they coveted; and, as soon as they had obtained what they wanted, that is, their own advancement, they declared the peace of the Church assured."[1]

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[1] D'Achéry, *Spicilegium*, ii, 953.

[2] Cf. Gerson, *De Modo Reformandi Ecclesiam in Conc. Univ.*, in Hardt, i, pt. v, 90.

84. *Results and Significance of the Council of Pisa*

The council of Pisa was called primarily for two purposes: (1) to restore unity to the Church: and (2) to inaugurate a system of reforms. But it actually failed to accomplish either; instead it produced only confusion, doubt, and uncertainty. When the council opened Latin Christendom was divided between two Popes; at its close Europe was divided among three claimants to Papal headship. The contemporary, Vrie, put these words into the mouth of the Church: "I had two husbands; now they have given me three."[2] Although the greater portion of the Church recognized Alexander V as Pope, still Benedict XIII had the support of Spain, Scotland, and Sardinia, while Gregory XII was obeyed by Naples, Poland, Bavaria, and parts of Germany and Italy. The problem of unification had to wait, therefore, until it was definitely settled in the Council of Constance. No one can doubt, however, that Pisa dealt the schism a deadly blow, even if Constance did complete its elimination. The infamous duality became a cursed trinity.[3] Both of the deposed Popes denied the right of the council to pass judgment on them. Gregory in his council at Cividale denounced that "schismatic" Peter of Candia. In Germany, although Alexander V was recognized by the Archbishop of Mainz and the Bishops of Strassburg, Halberstadt, and Hildesheim, still the Bishops of Worms, Speyer, Eichstädt, and Wurzburg clung to Gregory XII. The Bishop of Paderborn and others were uncertain or neutral.[4]

In the minds of the leading thinkers of the early fifteenth century there was no doubt whatever about the canonicity and universality of the Council of Pisa. The cardinals believed that their right to summon a general council to heal the schism for the good of the whole Church was indisputable. They relied upon the principles of self-preservation and the necessity of unity. The perjuries of the two rival claimants seemed to justify the cardinals in their contention: "Never shall we succeed in ending the schism, while the two obstinate persons are at the head of opposing parties. There is no undisputed

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[1] Cormenin, *Hist. of the Popes*, ii, 98, Phil. 1859.

[2] Hardt, i, 147; Finke, *Forschungen*, 48.

[3] Finke, 281, n. 1.

[4] Hergenröther, ii, 846.

Pope who can summon a general council. Since the Pope is doubtful, the Holy See must be considered vacant. We have, therefore, a lawful mandate to elect a Pope who will be undisputed, and to convoke the universal Church that her adhesion may strengthen our decision." This position was defended by the universities. Of course it was revolutionary, and possibly even dangerous. If the Popes were doubtful, were not their cardinals also doubtful? If their authority was uncertain, were they competent to call a council and to elect a new Pope? And, having elected Alexander V, how could they argue that he was the true Pope? It was only by standing squarely upon the revolutionary conciliar theory, which put the cardinals above the Pope and which made a general council the sovereign power of the whole Church above both the cardinals and the Pope, that the irregularities of the Council of Pisa could be interpreted as legal. It must be noted, however, that contemporary judgment argued in just that unprecedented manner and hence Alexander V was generally regarded as the true Pope. Certain it is that if Benedict XIII had a shadow of title in his favour, then the claims of Alexander V were very much stronger. The council had proceeded with an almost unprecedented unanimity, its sessions were not molested by any serious disturbance, and hence there was no need of a general protector.[1]

Modern Catholic historians are inclined to treat the Council of Pisa as an illegitimate and high-handed revolt against the claims of Gregory XII and the ecclesiastical constitution. Pastor calls it "the unholy synod" illegally summoned by the usurping cardinals.[2] Hergenröther-Kirsch describes it in a tone of fine irony, as an illegitimate body wanting in all the essentials of a genuine universal council. Hefele likewise denies its sovereign character and gives it a special rank.

Protestant historians, on the contrary, are wont to give undue praise to the Council of Pisa, because of its revolutionary assumptions, its attack on Papal prerogatives, its effort to change the constitution of the Church, its arbitrary attempt to heal the schism and its insistence upon the necessity of reformation. Creighton, however, severely criticizes the council since it "scarcely proceeded with the care, discretion, or singleness of purpose, which were necessary to enable it to perform the duty which it had undertaken". It sought to over-ride, not to conciliate the rival Popes. It identified itself too entirely with the cardinals and allowed them to dictate its actions. Instead of negotiating with Benedict and Gregory, or persuading them to attend the council, it commanded their presence and declared them contumacious for refusing to obey. It made no efforts to persuade the adherents of the Popes to desert them. Since the two Popes were old men, it would have been much wiser, in order to be sure of ending the schism, to have waited until they died before electing a new Pope. Furthermore, in order to insure reformation, the council should have prolonged its sessions and discussed matters with greater freedom without shirking personal responsibility. On the whole the council acted with dubious authority, settled dangerous questions hastily and precipitately, and forgot that after all it acted only for a large portion, and not all, of Christendom. Finally, it did not take into account the fact that many political motives and interests were involved and had to be adjusted before that universal acceptance could be secured which alone could bring the schism to an end.[1]

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[1] The only instance of an arrest was that of an Englishman who for insolence in the ninth session was thrown into prison. Mansi, xxvii, 395. Such local quarrels as that between the Cologners and the Mainzers were quietly patched up. Ib., 7.

[2] Pastor, i, 192.

Historically, the Council of Pisa was simply a desperate measure employed to solve an urgent and imperative need in the Church. It was the natural product of the revolutionary thinking and writing occasioned by the schism, and its intentions were pacific, constructive, and reformatory. It emphasized the necessity of preserving the unity of the Church in the face of the dual monarchy which had wrought such havoc in Christendom. It called the schismatics by their right names, spoke openly and boldly, and let Europe know what changes were a prerequisite to the continued life and usefulness of the Medieval Church. It brought the liberal, reformatory party of the Church into power and laid down a platform for freer discussion, desirable constitutional changes, and essential reforms. It undoubtedly paved the way for the more powerful, more representative, and more radical Council of Constance five years later. And it must not be forgotten that the council proceeded very cautiously, from its viewpoint, step by step from one strictly legal position to another without consciously wishing to violate the practices and traditions of the Church.

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[1] Creighton, i, 254–6.

The significance of the Council of Pisa lies in the fact that it recognized, for the first time since the Papacy attained its height, the necessity of subjecting it to some distinct limitations. Under the theory of absolute supremacy, there had been no possibility of redress against an incompetent, or disreputable Pontiff. To be sure an emperor, or a king, had frequently protested against the deeds of an objectionable Pope, and had even gone so far as to depose him and to have another chosen in his place ; but these were all instances of secular interference, however much approved by the clergy, and invariably failed of more than momentary success. The council expressed the will of the Church and was summoned by the cardinals themselves, the only permanent authority after the Pope that represented Latin Christendom, to try schismatic Pontiffs who had refused to give the Church unity in leadership for more than thirty years, and whom they or their own immediate predecessors had created. The motive power behind the council was the conciliar theory of ecclesiastical government advocated by the leaders of the liberal party in the Church. The members of that body felt, keenly and conscientiously, their responsibility to their various constituencies, and honestly believed that they had effected the only practical solution of the serious crisis which threatened the destruction of the Church at the time, and which would avert a similar peril for the future.

The rise of the conciliar spirit was a conscious revolt against the authority of the Pope and tarnished the divinity which had surrounded his office. It did not set up the canon of reason against tradition, but nevertheless it tended to destroy that high regard for Papal supremacy which every good Christian had hitherto recognized. The numerous appeals to the Bible in the pamphlets and sermons of the day pointed most significantly to the ground upon which the reformers of the sixteenth century stood.

85. *The Pontificate of Alexander V*

The Pisan Pope, Alexander V, occupied a doubtful throne for only ten months, when he died on 3rd May, 1410, at Bologna. Dietrich von Niem, the chronicler, remarks: "Our lord the Pope, on his bed of sickness, in the presence of all the cardinals, preached us a beautiful Latin sermon from the text, 'Peace I leave with you, My Peace I give unto you,' and begged all present to relax no effort to restore peace and unity to the Church."[1]

Alexander remained at Pisa, after the dissolution of the council, until November, organizing his court, and awaiting information that the way had been cleared for his entry into Rome. The political situation in Italy immediately engaged his attention.[2] Louis of Anjou arrived at Pisa and his claim to Naples was at once recognized. On 1st November the powerful Ladislaus, still a supporter of Gregory XII, was summoned to appear and answer for his faithlessness as a vassal of the Church. Meanwhile Cardinal Cossa was sent to Rome to seize and pacify the city preparatory to his removal thither.

On 12th October, 1409, Alexander, himself a Franciscan friar, issued the bull *Regnans in Ecclesia*, which gave the preaching friars, the Minorites, Carmelites, and Augustinians, full and uncontrolled right to hear confessions in every parish in Christendom. The conflict between the priests and the friars had been in progress for centuries. Boniface VIII had decreed that no friar could preach in a parish church without the rector's consent, and that bishops could forbid friars from hearing confessions in their dioceses. Furthermore, friars receiving pay for any religious services were required to hand over a quarter of the fee to the parish church. The elevation of Alexander V to the Papacy rejoiced the hearts of the friars, and they immediately besieged him with requests for special legislation in their behalf. The promulgation of the bull was the result, and the clergy were ordered to read the bull to their parishioners from the steps of their altars. A terrific uproar proceeded from the clergy, who resented this invasion of their prerogatives. The University of Paris hastened a deputation to Pisa to protest, but in vain. In revenge they expelled all mendicants from the University and forbade their preaching in Paris, and the French king ordered parish priests not to allow friars to preach or hear confession in their parish churches. Other universities followed the example of Paris, so that the bull lost its advantage to the friars to a large extent, until Alexander's successor repealed it.[1]

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[1] Theod. v. Niem, *Schismata*, iii, 52.

[2] Valois, ii, 83.

Driven out of Pisa by a pestilence, sometime in November, the Pope went first to Prato, thence to Pistoia, and finally to Bologna on 12th January, 1410, where he was completely under the influence of the powerful and unscrupulous Cardinal Cossa.

Alexander manifested considerable interest in suppressing heresy. He encouraged the Inquisition and suggested several methods for raising funds to pay the inquisitors: [2] taxing the Jews of Avignon, and having each bishop meet the expenses for his own diocese. He ordered the Talmud to be burned.[3] He also instructed the higher clergy to suppress and destroy the writings of Wiclif,[4] and commanded the Archbishop of Prague to root out the Hussite heresy.[5] He even sought to use the machinery of the Inquisition against the schismatic followers of Benedict and Gregory.[6] He summoned Huss to Rome to answer the charges made against him. Instead of answering the summons in person, Huss sent two of his friends to plead his cause, and meanwhile appealed from "Alexander ill-informed to Alexander well-informed".

Most of his contemporaries represented Alexander as a man of remarkably mild disposition, who sought to oblige all, and who never refused any favour within his power not unlawful to grant. Indeed, his generosity bounded upon prodigality. He lived rather sumptuously for a Pope and enjoyed giving banquets to his visitors, yet was strictly religious without affecting any remarkable sanctity. He had a reputation as a learned man, wrote numerous books, was a powerful orator, a keen philosopher and an able theologian. But he was sadly deficient in leadership and was not the man needed at the time to unify the Church and to place it on a high plane of spiritual usefulness.

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[1] Schwab, 459–60; Lenfant, i, 313–6.
[2] Lea, *Hist. of the Inq.*, i, 532; ii, 138.
[3] Ib., i, 556.
[4] Ib., ii, 443.
[5] Ib., ii, 447.
[6] Ib., ii, 157; iii, 204.

86. *John XXIII*

Upon the death of the Pisan Pope, Alexander V, 3rd May, 1410, it was clearly seen that if the third line of Popes was to be continued with the expectation that the next incumbent would succeed in unifying Western Christendom under his banner, a man of unquestioned courage, physical strength, wide aquaintance in European political affairs, and recognized capacity for efficient leadership must be chosen as his successor. The election was made entirely upon the ground of political expediency and necessity. Among the cardinals the conviction prevailed with singular unanimity that the only member of the college whose energy in conducting affairs, whose conspicuous resolution in perplexing administrative and executive situations, and whose superior statesmanship already amply demonstrated in Church and state, qualified him for the leadership in Italian problems at the time, was Baltasar Cossa, Cardinal of Bologna. His commanding personality and his dominating mind set him forth head and shoulders above the other cardinals. Under the hypnotic spell of his power, they had permitted him to nominate Alexander V and to dictate his policy, consequently it seemed but logical that under the circumstances he should be elevated to the chair of Peter. Besides, outside influence was exerted to the same end, for Louis of Anjou sent pressing admonitions to the French cardinals to procure Cossa's election.

Carlo Malatesta sent envoys to beg the cardinals to defer the election of a Pisan Pope in the hope of more easily solving the peace and unity of the Church. The influence of Cossa, however, and the fear that in case of vacancy they would be without the necessities of life, to say nothing of other anticipations, counteracted the mission of the envoys, who contented themselves with asking the cardinals to pledge the new Pope to promise to abdicate in case his rivals abdicated, or to unite with them in calling a general council.[1] So the election of Cossa was announced by the seventeen cardinals on 17th May, and he was enthroned on 25th May with the title of John XXIII.[2] He was the last pontiff known by the name of

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[1] Martène-Durand, *Amp. Coll.*, viii, 162 ff.

[2] John's rules of chancery were published 19th July, 1410. Hardt, i, xxi, 954.

John, previously such a favourite, for no Pope since his day has cared to revive the notorious memories surrounding his career.

Certain it was that the cardinals could not defend the election of John XXIII on the ground of moral character, reputation for spirituality, or intellectual qualification. He came of a wealthy Neapolitan family of noble rank, was a wild adventuresome youth, who during the wars between Ladislaus and Louis of Anjou led a band of piratical corsairs on the coasts of Southern Italy, and finally went to the University of Bologna where he received the degree of doctor in canon and civil law. After graduation he repaired to Rome, where Boniface IX, a friend of his family, became his patron, promoted him to one position after another until he attained the dignity of Cardinal of Bologna in 1402.[1] He was of great service to Boniface IX in raising money by blackmailing the bishops and by organizing the sale of indulgences. After appointment in 1403 as legate over Bologna he ruled as a temporal prince till 1410 and became rich through the robbery of Church goods,[2] He quarrelled with Gregory XII over the revenues of the bishopric of Bologna, and became one of his inveterate foes. He led the secession movement, which resulted in the reunion of two colleges of cardinals and in the summons of the Council of Pisa, and he virtually dictated the election of Alexander V to heal the schism.[3] Although he enjoyed a reputation as a clever leader of men, a very successful statesman, and an able general, at the same time he was universally condemned as a monster of vice, lust, cruelty, deceit, and tyranny.[4] The immoral excesses of his private life qualified him for a successful career in a military camp of that day rather than in the Church.[5] Consequently his appointment to the office of Vicar of Christ was " a grotesque and blasphemous incongruity ".[6]

The day after his coronation John wrote to all bishops and Christian princes to acquaint them with his promotion and to exhort them to support him against the two pretenders to the Pontifical dignity whom the Universal Council had condemned and deposed. At the same time he revoked all the censures pronounced by either, annulled their decrees, and confirmed those of Alexander V and the Council of Pisa.[1]

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[1] Souchon, ii, 100, says that Cossa bought his honour and offices from Boniface IX, with gold.

[2] Muratori, xviii, 976.

[3] Niem, *Vita Joan XXIII*; Gobelinus, 6, c. 90; Leonardus Aretinus, 257; Souchon, ii, 101, shows that he was deeply interested in the question of union, and had the University of Bologna draw up definite recommendations.

[4] Niem, in Meibomius, i, 6.

[5] *And. Bilii Hist.*, Mur., xix, 42.

[6] Creighton, i, 268.

The first problem before John was to break down the support which Carlo Malatesta,[2] Ladislaus, the King of Naples, and Rupert, the King of Germany, were giving to Gregory XII, either by diplomacy or by force. Consequently his first step was to identify his cause with that of Louis of Anjou against Ladislaus by issuing letters to all prelates and princes exhorting them to lend him all possible assistance. Louis hastened to Bologna with his forces, somewhat reduced by the capture of five of his galleys by the Genoese, who had revolted from France and joined Ladislaus, where he joined the Pope on 6th June, 1410. Reinforced by John's soldiers, Louis set out for Rome, which was easily taken, and there he remained month after month begging John to join him, a request that was echoed by the Roman people. Finally, on 31st March, 1411, John left Bologna for the Eternal City and entered it 12th April, amid the acclamations of the people. A fortnight later a strong force well generalled set forth on a holy crusade to drive [3] Ladislaus from his throne, and on 19th May, 1411, Louis won a signal victory over Ladislaus, who barely escaped with his life. The captured standards of Ladislaus and Gregory XII were sent to Rome and there trailed through the streets in the mud in a vulgar display of insolent triumph. Louis, however, was not wise enough to follow up his victory by decisive action, and Ladislaus escaped and soon restored his fallen fortunes, while Louis returned to Rome on 12th July without having overthrown his foe and on 3rd August set sail for France.[4]

John's situation in Rome was desperate. Bologna had revolted and set up a republican rule. Florence and Siena had deserted the Papal league. Forced therefore, to deal with Ladislaus alone, John excommunicated him, deprived him of his kingdom, and proclaimed a crusade against him.

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[1] Raynaldus, ann. 1410.

[2] He sent envoys to Carlo Malatesta to persuade him to desert Gregory. Finke, *Acta*, 13. Legates were also sent to Benedict XIII to persuade him to yield. Ib., 2.

[3] Ib., 1411, No. 5; 1412, No. 2.

[4] Muratori, xxiv, 1017.

Deserted by his chief general, Sforza, who went over to Ladislaus, John always an opportunist began to negotiate with Ladislaus and in June, 1412, made peace with him on the following terms: (1) John recognized Ladislaus as king of both Naples and Sicily; (2) Ladislaus was to be appointed gonfalonier of the Church and to receive 120,000 ducats within two years during which time he was to hold Ascoli, Viterbo, Perugia, and Benevento as a pledge; (3) all the arrears due to the Pope from Naples were remitted; (4) Ladislaus agreed to keep 1,000 lances for the service of the Church and to induce Gregory XII to renounce his claims to the Papacy within three months, in exchange for appointment as legate of the March of Ancona and the payment of 50,000 ducats; (5) in case Gregory refused these arrangements, Ladislaus agreed to send him as prisoner to Provence.[1] Ladislaus then called a synod of bishops and theologians at Naples and to them expressed his doubt of the validity of upholding Gregory when other princes had accepted John. The synod, of course, expressed its willingness to desert Gregory, whereupon the wily king wrote to the Pope on 16th October, 1412, that by the "grace of the Holy Spirit" he recognized him as lawful head of the Church.[2] But Gregory, instead of complying with the orders he received from Ladislaus fled to Rimini.

This disgraceful treaty patched up between John and Ladislaus was soon broken. The faithless Ladislaus had entered into it only to gain time and to strengthen his military power. Ambitious to create an Italian kingdom, he was determined to drive John out of Rome. In June, 1413, his troops occupied Rome with the aid of the Romans who had become disgusted with the tyrannical exactions of John, despite the fact that the Pope had abolished the detested taxes and had tried with all his power to arouse the civic and ecclesiastical patriotism of the citizens to resist the invader. John and the cardinals fled with the horsemen of Ladislaus in hot pursuit, first to Viterbo, thence to Montefriascone, thence to Siena, and finally to Florence, which place he reached on 21st June, 1413.

Before he was forced to flee from Rome, John had held a general council of the Church, which Alexander V had promised at Pisa would be called within three years, for the

[1] Muratori, xxii, 868.

[2] Raynaldus, 1412, 2.

purpose of carrying out the work of reformation begun at Pisa. As early as 2nd February, 1411, John realized the necessity devolving upon him of making good the promise of his predecessor,[1] but the summons was not sent out until 29th April, when a call was issued to all Christendom to meet in Rome, on 1st April, 1412.[2] The University of Paris had meanwhile written to John reminding him of his duty in respect to the council and suggested the selection of some independent city as a suitable place. In the letter calling the council John explained the necessity of his going to Rome, abused Ladislaus, enumerated the advantages of holding the council in the Eternal City, invited Benedict XIII and Gregory XII to attend, and excommunicated anyone who hindered prelates from attending.[3]

For the purpose of strengthening his party, in June, 1411, John had created fourteen new cardinals from the most important men in every kingdom, and among them were: Peter d'Ailly of France, and two Englishmen, Thomas Langley and Robert Hallam. He likewise raised many lower clergy to a higher rank in Italy for the purpose of having a majority in the council.[4] From June, 1410, to March, 1415, 231 promotions of prelates had been made in all Europe and of this number 117, or over fifty per cent, were Italians.[5] John himself sought to weaken the council by discouraging prelates from attending, and fear and war kept foreign representatives away, so that the number present was very small. Few persons believed that much could be accomplished in a council held at Rome during such a troubled time. Because of the hazardous condition of affairs in April, 1412, the council was postponed and finally met on 10th February, 1413, and apparently lasted until 3rd March, 1413, when John dismissed the few prelates present, agreeing to call another council in December next at a place of which notice would be given in three months.[6]

There was some hope before the council convened that the work of reformation would be seriously undertaken. The University of Paris towards the end of 1411 had drawn up a reform programme, very much like D'Ailly's *Capita agendorum* and probably based upon it,[1] and that programme had been taken to the council by the representative of the university. A French synod held early in 1413 had urged the necessity of carrying out the correction of abuses in the Church.[2] In the council when proposals were made to proceed with the work of reformation, Cardinal Zabarella rose and talked the project to death.[3] In fact, the one act for which the council is remembered is the bull *Inter omnes*, 13th February, which condemned the writings of Wiclif and was forthwith carried out by a solemn burning on the steps of St Peter's.[4]

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[1] Finke, *Acta*, 109.

[2] Alexander V had designated no place for the council of 1412.

[3] Raynaldus, 1411, § 7, Finke, 127.

[4] Hardt, ii, 230.

[5] Hübler, *Konstanzer Reformation*, 318.

[6] Raynaldus, 1413, § 16.

This brief council was ridiculed by contemporaries and soon forgotten by later generations.[5] One of the current anecdotes explained how at vespers in the Pope's chapel just before the first session of the council, as the hymn "*Veni Creator Spiritus*" was begun, a screech-owl flew in and settled on the Pontiff's head. "A strange shape for the Holy Ghost" laughingly sneered a cardinal. "It is an evil omen," exclaimed the frightened John, and all present agreed with him.[6] Of course, the tale lost nothing by repetition, and was soon related over the whole Church as a marvellous incident. The disappointment of those who had hoped more from the council was probably well expressed by Cardinal Filastre when he wrote in his diary in November, 1414: "With the election of Pope John things have not gone along well; clearly it was an error, as the personality of the candidate foretold." [7]

After John was driven out of Rome by Ladislaus, with no power in Italy to which he could appeal for efficient support, he wrote melancholy letters to the princes of Christendom abusing his victorious foe, and begging for assistance. France had failed him; Ladislaus had betrayed him; Carlo Malatesta, the only honest prince in Italy who sincerely tried to heal the schism, refused to recognize him as Pope; Gregory still had loyal supporters; England was too distant to be of any service; and so John turned his eye longingly to Germany for support of his feeble power.[8]

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[1] Finke, *Acta*, 111, 114, 149; Sunonsfeld, *Analekton*, i, 47.

[2] Finke, 111, 131, 149, 150, 155; *Chron. relig. St. D.*, 22, 41.

[3] Muratori, iii, pt. ii, 846.

[4] Finke, 162.

[5] Hefele, vii, 17; Finke, 2, 310; Acta, 108.

[6] Niem, in Meibomius, i, 19; Muratori, iii, pt. ii, 846; Hardt, i, pt. ii, 67.

[7] Finke, *Forsch.*, 70; Mansi, xxvii, 533; Hardt, ii, 208.

[8] Muratori, xix, 928.

The triple-headed schism in the Papacy had been reflected in the Empire. The imperial crown was claimed by (1) Wenceslas, King of Bohemia; (2) Sigismund, King of Hungary, his brother; and (3) Jobst, the Markgraf of Moravia, by October, 1410, and it was said that once again three kings were going to adore Christ, but they were very different from the three wise men of old. The situation was relieved by the death of Jobst on 8th January, 1411 and by an agreement with the besotted Wenceslas whereby Sigismund left the imperial crown to his rival and contented himself with the humbler title of King of the Romans, to which honour he was accordingly unanimously elected on 21st July, 1411. Thenceforth the divided allegiance of Germany was at an end, for Sigismund recognized John XXIII as the rightful Pope. The German monarch most earnestly wished to heal the schism and purify the Church, and for that purpose was determined to hold a universal council whose authority would be unquestioned. Hence from this time forward the career of this ecclesiastical ruler is bound up with the history of the great reform Council of Constance.

The fact that a man like John XXIII could occupy such a conspicuous place in the Church at this time, and even secure his election to the Papacy, largely explains why there arose such a universal cry for reformation from right-minded, well-thinking men. His early ideals, learned as a pirate, were continued throughout his whole life. He did not hesitate to employ treachery, perjury, robbery, falsehood, and even murder to gain his end, and that end was always a purely personal and selfish one. He turned night into day and day into night in his immoral carousals, and usually slept until noon. He was fond of display and shameless vanity. His immorality was notorious.[1] Unscrupulous and profligate to a degree that shocked even Italy of that day, still his ability as a leader of men was allowed to outweigh his notoriously bad character, while his capacity for questionable wire-pulling and the use of his money helped him to win the Papal crown even though "destitute of every moral virtue and capable of every vice ". As Pope he did not give up his evil ways but practised his shameless acts daily without restraint.[1]

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[1] Conrad Justinger said: "The cardinals chose the wickedest and most infamous man that could be found." Quoted in Gieseler, § 130, n. 11. Pastor, calls him "utterly worldly-minded" and "not scrupulously conscientious", but holds that otherwise he was not the monster of vice pictured by his contemporaries. i, 191.

John was an excellent business man and an able financier. The divided Papacy made it extremely difficult for him to raise sufficient funds to meet the needs of his office, consequently he resorted to all the evil methods of the day to secure money. Expectancies were commonly sold, and provisions were given out with a free hand. He forced gold from the Romans, debased their currency, sold their ecclesiastical treasures and even the churches, and took whatever his greedy fingers could touch. Benefices were auctioned off to the highest bidders and sometimes were sold to several persons at once. Appointments to office were frequently pre-dated for a consideration. Curial offices were openly sold, and all kinds of concessions were made for compensation. In the kingdom of Sicily benefices were shamelessly handled. When these devices did not suffice to meet his financial needs, he forced his cardinals to lend him funds. Broguy gave him 27,000 florins and received as security the *fructus primi anni* of all his benefices.

This Pope was remarkably lavish in bestowing favours, especially upon his own family. Under him the first regular division of the income of the Church was made between the Pope and cardinals. Cardinals were freely granted benefices. Cardinal Isoloni, a married man and not a priest, was given a yearly pension of 4,000 scudi. Henry IV of England gave John permission to bestow four benefices in England on a favourite cardinal. Presents were given to relatives right and left. Clothing, boots, and "a green upholstered chair" were sent to nephews, and 100 gulden to his mother. His sister's son, a very young man of vile habits, was given a cardinal's hat, but the cardinals checked his plan to bring a second cardinal into the college. Another relative, Michael Cana, was made admiral of the Papal fleet.[2]

It was seriously proposed by a contemporary that the principle of the ordeal should be employed to settle the question of the true Pope. He suggested that masses, prayers, and fasts should be ordered to bring unity under John XXIII.

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[1] Martène-Durand, *Col.* vii, 1200 ; Nieheim, *De schismate*, iii, 11 ; Gerson, *Opp.*, ii, 883.

[2] Souchon, ii, 111–119.

In order that God might reveal his will in the triple dilemma, he urged that the name of each of the three claimants be written on a piece of paper with these words : " This is the true Pope." After a devout mass of the Holy Ghost, the three slips of paper should be thrown into the fire. Then the Pope whose name was on the uninjured piece of paper should be recognized by all as the true Pope.[1]

Certain it is that John as a Pope was a disappointment if indeed not a complete failure. The schism was not healed. Gregory and Benedict still had staunch followers, and John was unable either to crush them or to buy their deposition. He did not succeed in permanently recovering the capital of Christendom nor did he make himself master of Italy as it was expected he would. A genuine reformation of the Church was not undertaken nor even seriously considered by this Pontiff ; consequently all friends of reform in the Church lost their faith in him as a Vicar of Christ who had at heart the real welfare of the great organization over which he pretended to rule. In the coming general council he was destined to play a sorry and despicable part.

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[1] Finke, 2. Cf. Pastor, i, 110.

CHAPTER XIII

THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE: I. THE SCHISM HEALED

87. *Causes for Calling the Council*

THE Council of Constance was opened on 5th November, 1414, and did not close until 22nd April, 1418. It has gone down in history as one of the most important assemblies of men in the annals of Europe, for it had the character both of an œcumenical council of the Roman Church and of an international congress. Never was a world gathering confronted by more momentous problems, involving the peace and progress of society, and never were great opportunities more neglected, nor high expectations more deeply disappointed.

The causes which led to the summoning of the Council of Constance were clearly recognizable by thinking men of that day as:—

1. The failure of the revolutionary Council of Pisa to give the Church either the unity so badly needed, or reforms so widely demanded.

2. The perpetuation and indeed aggravation of the Schism by the election of the Pisan Pope, Alexander V, and his successor, John XXIII, who only constituted a third line of Papal pretenders.

3. The cry for the complete reformation of the Church from top to bottom, which had become so universal and insistent that it could no longer be ignored, and the conviction that only a council representing the entire Church could accomplish the process of purification and correction so essential to the efficiency and utility of the Church as the religious guide of Europe.

4. The increase of heresy in the Church to an alarming degree. Nearly all the controversial tracts of the day mentioned the dangerous spread of heretical ideas as a result of the Babylonian Captivity and the Schism. The Council of Pisa even sought to prove by evidence that Benedict XIII and Gregory XII were heretics and their deposition was based

in part upon that charge. The rise of the Lollards in England and the movement led by John Huss and Jerome of Prague in Bohemia threatened not only ecclesiastical secessions from Roman jurisdiction, but also political rebellions as well.

5. The belief in the conciliar theory of Church government, which made a council representing the entire Church, and not the Pope, the source of sovereign power in the Church. This revolutionary conception of the ecclesiastical constitution had been asserted, elaborated, buttressed by citations to Scripture, history, law, theology, and philosophy; and propagated over Europe by university faculties, the keenest lawyers, the ablest theologians, and the leading rulers, for more than a century. The deplorable schism established the deep-rooted conviction in the minds of a majority of the leaders of thought in Western Europe that the application of this theory alone could save the Church from grave disaster. The council had been convened in accordance with that idea, and its members stood squarely and firmly upon this new ground in their proceedings. In the same spirit and hopeful of a satisfactory outcome, Europe co-operated with remarkable unanimity in the Council of Constance.

6. John XXIII, after three years of fruitless endeavour through diplomacy and the employment of such political and military power as he could enlist, had failed either permanently to recover Rome and thus to make himself master of Italy, or to reduce his two rivals to impotence by subtracting their political supporters. Consequently he had come to the conclusion that the unification of Christendom in the recognition of himself as the true Pope could be secured only through a general council, which he could directly or indirectly influence in his own interest. No doubt his success in manipulating the actions of the Council of Pisa led him to believe that he could control the new body. Hence he gladly co-operated with Sigismund, then at Como, in planning for a general council, and sent two cardinals north to meet the king on 13th October, 1413, with definite instructions, however, to insist upon some place under John's control as the seat of the council. To his secretary John had said: "The whole point of the council lies in the place, and I will take care that it is not held where the Emperor will be more powerful than I." [1]

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[1] Muratori, xix, 928.

7. Sigismund, elected King of the Romans by united Germany after the ending of the triple political schism, was earnestly desirous of holding a universal council for several reasons.[1] In the first place he desired to have the schism definitely and permanently healed, not alone for the sake of Christian unity, but particularly to further his imperial aspirations. In the second place he was honestly interested in a genuine reformation of the Church. In the third place he desired to have the Bohemian heretical movement suppressed, because it seriously threatened the political unity of Germany. A strong personality, in the prime of manhood, the most imposing political figure in Europe, brave and vain of display, Sigismund was resolved to take advantage of John's helpless condition and to take the lead in calling the council. To John's ambassadors, he proposed Constance as a suitable place for the council, because it was an imperial city, where he could guarantee peace and order; because of its central geographical location; because of its healthy situation; and because of the ease with which all visitors could be housed and fed.[2] The Papal delegates protested in vain against the king's obstinacy, but finally accepted Constance in the Pope's name. John in person met Sigismund at Lodi early in December, 1413, but all his artifices and skill were unavailing, so he was forced to consent to Constance.

88. *The Calling of the Council*

The original call for the Council of Constance came not from the cardinals nor from the Pope, but from the German Emperor with the consent of a deputation of cardinals representing John XXIII. Without waiting until John could give or refuse consent to his delegates' action, Sigismund, on 30th October, 1413, issued a proclamation summoning all Christian princes and prelates to meet in a universal council at Constance on 1st November, 1414, and promising that he would be there in person to guarantee security and freedom of action.[3] After failing in a personal interview at Lodi to persuade Sigismund to change the place of holding the council, John on 9th December, 1413, issued his summons for a council to be held at the same time and place as stated in the proclamation of the German ruler. This made the call look as if it were a joint action of the temporal and spiritual powers.[1] Summonses were also sent by Sigismund to Gregory XII, Benedict XIII, and the kings of France and Aragon.[2]

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[1] Finke, *Acta*, 14, 88–92, asserts that Sigismund from the time of his election, 21st July, 1411, thought of calling a general council.

[2] He also made the point that Constance was far removed from the influence of all three Popes. Finke, *Acta*, i, 169, 171. Cardinal Zabarella had likewise suggested the same place. Hardt, i, 540.

[3] Hardt, vi, 5.

No one who puts his intellectual finger on the pulse of popular feeling and thought for the years immediately following the Council of Pisa can doubt that Western Europe was ready and eager for a general council to solve the grave problems of the day. The disunion of the ecclesiastical system was reflected in the civil discord and divisions of the time. Italy was in a hopeless state of turmoil; the Greek Empire and Hungary were trembling in dread of the Turks; Bohemia was torn by civil and religious differences; the Empire was enfeebled by factions; France was ruled by the mad king, Charles VI, who aroused the hostility of the Burgundians and Armagnacs; England was disturbed by the Lollards and on the eve of a conflict with France; and the small kingdoms of Spain were busy driving back the Mohammedans. Men everywhere were casting their eyes backward and talking about the peaceful days of the past—and wondering why those days could not be restored. Thus hopelessly distracted and confused, Europe was longing to realize its peace and unity in some manner, and hence eagerly accepted the call of Sigismund for a representative convocation of the delegates of the Church and princes. Indeed the council from the very outset was regarded as a congress of national interests rather than as an exclusively ecclesiastical synod.

89. *Attendance at the Council*

The attendance of the Council of Constance at its height was the most remarkable of any council or congress held in the history of Europe up to that time. All the wisest and ablest men of Europe, both lay and ecclesiastical, as well as the curious and the idle, prepared to make their appearance at Constance. John XXIII hesitated about appearing in person and spoke of sending representatives, while he went to Rome, which, after the death of Ladislaus on 6th August, 1414, had been taken in his name. But the advice of his cardinals,[1] the thought of presiding over a great popular council, and the confident expectation that he would be recognized as the true head of the Church, determined him to go. Meanwhile Sigismund, on request, secured for him from the magistrates of Constance a promise that he should be received with due honour and recognized as the only true Pope; that the prerogatives of the curia and the Papal office should be freely exercised; and that he should be permitted to remain at Constance or withdraw at pleasure. On 1st October, 1414, John set out for Constance *via* Verona, Trent, and the Arlberg pass, from the summit of which he looked down on Lake Constance and exclaimed, "Aha! A trap for foxes!"[1] In the Tyrol he met and formed an alliance with Frederick of Austria, an enemy of Sigismund, to whom John was to be greatly indebted for favours some months later.[2] On 28th October he entered Constance, mounted on a white horse covered with a red rug and its bridle led by two devoted noblemen, attended by nine cardinals and 600 mounted horsemen. The city magistrates received him with solemn pomp and due reverence, provided him with suitable lodgings, and saw to it that his cellar was provided with four large barrels of Alsace wine, eight of native wine, and other choice brands.[3] With his title recognized by so vast a portion of Christendom, with his chests full of gold, with his long and successful experience in manipulating men individually and collectively, and with the support of the fourteen cardinals and many higher clergy he had created, John felt reasonably sure of safeguarding his Papal tiara. He had brought with him twenty-four secretaries and 200 servants, among whom were sixteen janitors and twelve butlers.

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[1] Hardt, vi, 7.

[2] Mansi, xxviii, 2–4. Not until August, 1414, was Gregory XII, who had recognized Sigismund as King of the Romans, notified of the election, and then he was promised by Sigismund a good position in the event of his deposition. Finke, *Forsch.*, 23.

Sigismund, so engrossed with his coronation ceremonies, which occurred on 8th November at Aachen, and the political affairs of his German kingdom, was not able to reach Constance until Christmas Day, when he arrived accompanied by his queen and a large retinue of nobles and guards. The greater part of the day from early morn until the middle of the afternoon was given up to religious services. The king attended mass in royal state wearing his new crown, read the Gospel as deacon, received from Pope John a sword with which he was charged to protect the Church, which he solemnly swore to do. The friends of the council rejoiced in the presence of Sigismund, whom they addressed in flattering terms as the second Messiah who had come to free and save the Church. Once more it looked as if the German Emperor was assuming the headship of the Christian Church.

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[1] Raynaldus, 1414, No. 6.

[2] Loserth, 466.

[3] Richental, 25–8, gives a vivid description of John's reception. His account of the council reads very much like that of a modern newspaper reporter.

The invitation to attend the Council of Constance by both Pope and King had been given to prelates and princes in general terms. Apparently there was no uniform method of selecting delegates. Naturally it was assumed that all the higher clergy, who found it possible, would arrange to be present. Pope John had been accompanied by nine cardinals and probably some higher clergy in his retinue upon his entry to Constance. Other cardinals followed as they could until by 5th November twenty-three were present,[1] and each week of the opening months saw the arrival of new groups from Italy.

Central Europe was within such easy reach of Constance that all through October, November, and December the spiritual and temporal princes of the Church, as well as the lesser lights, were arriving. The list preserved in Richental shows an exceptionally large number of representatives from this region as was to be expected.

England on 20th October, 1414, sent as " solemn envoys " for the redress of " excesses and for the union of Christendom " three bishops, one abbot, one prior, one earl, two lords, and two knights—ten in all.[2] Their expenses were paid by the clergy of the kingdom.[3] They reached Constance on 7th December, accompanied by about 800 knights and esquires.

From France arrived 14th December, twenty-two representatives from the University of Paris, and with them many archbishops and bishops.[4] At the suggestion of the King of France each province elected its own representatives to the council—a method that was revolutionary.[5] The French delegation, with men like Gerson and D'Ailly among them, was conspicuous for its men of learning and leadership.[1] John Huss with his eight attendants entered Constance on 3rd November.

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[1] Richental, 26. [2] Thompson, Usk's *Chron.*, 304; Rymer, *Foedera*, ix, 167. [3] Thompson, Usk's *Chron.*, 304, 310. [4] Richental, 30. [5] Kruger, ii, § 45, 209.

Meanwhile between the arrival of John and that of Sigismund the number of attendants had gradually increased. D'Ailly reached Constance on 17th November,[2] Cardinal John of Ragusa representing Gregory XII arrived on 19th December.[3] But Sigismund's dramatic arrival was the signal for a rush to the small imperial city on which the thoughts of all Europe were now centred. Daily, princes and prelates, monks and scholars, nobles and theologians, high and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, from every court, every nation, and almost every village poured into Constance. The representatives of power, learning, and religion came from Italy, France, Germany, Bohemia, and Poland; from England, Sweden, Denmark; and from Hungary and even distant Constantinople. In their train followed a motley crowd of curious sightseers, merchants, bankers, immoral women, knaves and adventurers of every sort. Never in all its previous history had Christendom witnessed such a gathering. It was estimated that from first to last there were present at the council:—

33 cardinals with a retinue of 3,056 followers.[4]
5 patriarchs accompanied by 118 persons.
47 archbishops with attendants numbering 4,007.[5]
145 bishops with 6,000 persons in their company.
93 titular bishops attended by 360 persons.
132 abbots with 2,000 persons in their retinues.
155 provosts with servants and assistants numbering 1,600.
361 doctors of law, civil and canon, attended by 1,260.
171 doctors of medicine with 1,600 assistants.
217 doctors of theology with 2,600 subordinates.
16 master apothecaries with 300 assistants.
1,400 masters of arts and licentiates with 3,000 attendants.

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[1] Richental, 34.

[2] Bess, 119.

[3] Ib.

[4] Fincke, *Forsch.*, 83.

[5] The bishops and princes brought their servants and retainers with them.

37 universities with a following of 2,000 persons.
24 auditors and secretaries with 300 attendants.
142 writers of bulls.
5,300 simple priests and scholars.
24 heralds of kings with their servants.
39 archdukes.
141 counts.
32 princely lords.
83 kings from Europe, Asia, and Africa sent ambassadors.
71 barons with their squires.
1,500 knights and more than 20,000 squires.
472 representatives of the imperial cities.
352 representatives of the other cities.
1,700 musicians and actors.
1,400 merchants, hotelkeepers and artisans of all sorts, and 72 goldsmiths.[1]

The council was favoured by the presence of two Popes, namely, John XXIII with his twenty-four secretaries, twelve court officers and a retinue of 600 persons; and Martin V, who was chosen at Constance, with his thirty servants. In addition Gregory XII was represented by the Patriarch of Constantinople and Cardinal John of Ragusa. The most conspicuous drawing-card of the gathering was the Emperor-elect, Sigismund, with his armed guard of noblemen, "two queens and five princely ladies."[2] It was estimated that 5,000 persons came and went daily.[3] Beds were prepared in the city for the accommodation of 36,000 visitors. Pope John had sent representatives to Constance several months ahead of his arrival to assist in preparations for the gathering. The dozen English and Scotch delegates were escorted by 800 mounted men headed by fifers.[4] The poor heretic, Huss, was accompanied by eight attendants. Stalls were provided for 30,000 horses. Public harlots from all over Europe flocked to Constance—700 of them were located in rented houses and many others were scattered all over the city. Altogether it was estimated that about 18,000 prelates and 80,000 laymen were in attendance at the Council.[5] The number of visitors in the little walled city of about 8,000 varied from 50,000 to 100,000 and was constantly fluctuating. Constance had become the most important spot on the map of Europe, for never before in the history of Christendom had there been such an international assembly of the power and brain in Church and State.

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[1] Richental (Brandt), 143; Lenfant, ii, 365.
[2] Reichental, 144. His own queen and the queen of Bosnia.
[3] Ib.
[4] Thompson, Usk's *Chron.*, 304; Rymer, *Foedera*, ix, 167; Hardt, v, pt. 2, p. 10.
[5] Hardt, v, 50–3; Döllinger, *Ch. Hist.*, iv, 155.

90. *Conditions in Constance during the Council*

The streets of the city and the fields all around resembled one big fair. Entertainments of all sorts were not lacking, for tournaments were held, all sorts of games and contests were arranged, dances were numerous, acrobatic and juggling feats, parades, musicals, and crude acting were in constant progress, while the beer-halls, wine-rooms, and hotels were open for eating, drinking, and merrymaking. Merchants from all over Europe and even from the various Oriental countries offered their wares in endless variety. Bankers from Italy in large numbers were there to exchange travellers' money,[1] while the pawnshops of the Jews did a thriving business. Even the young Cosmo de Medici of Florence went to Constance for business reasons.

To feed the enormous multitudes and to care for their horses took an enormous crowd of servants and labourers, as well as a huge quantity of supplies of food and drink. The hay and fish came from distant points by water, while wine, beer, corn, vegetables, and fruits were supplied by the surrounding country. The burgomaster and city fathers were kept busy policing the city and looking after the physical welfare of the guests.[2] City ordinances were passed to regulate the price of bread, meats, eggs, grains, beds and houses; to forbid any person being abroad at night without a light after the curfew rang; and to prevent brawls and noises at night. A bed for two persons, with clean sheets every two weeks, cost 1½ gulden (sixty cents) a month.[3] Chains were put across the streets at night and all shouting was prohibited. Sigismund had taken the council under his protection,[1] but the city supplied 2,000 policemen to keep the peace and to protect the visitors. The instances of stealing were remarkably few considering the circumstances, but it was reported that 500 persons strangely disappeared in the lake. Only two persons were punished for street brawls, and property was remarkably secure. George von End seized a ship loaded with corn, but was captured, imprisoned, and his castle at Grimmenstein was destroyed. No outbreak of fire was recorded during the continuance of the council.

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[1] Like the bankers, Rothschild and Baring at the Congress of Aix la Chapelle in 1818. Schulte, *Die Fugger*, i, 338.

[2] Stuhr, 30.

[3] Richental, 32, gives a long list of these regulations: stable room 1 pfenig and 3 heller a month, a loaf of white bread 1 pfenig, a large head of cabbage 1 pfenig, a pound of beef 3 pfenig, port 4 pfenig, an old hen 7 pfenig, etc.

Just as there was no uniformity in selecting delegates to the council, so the methods of defraying their expenses of travel and sustenance varied. Single members supported themselves, while representatives sent by a particular country, like England, for instance, or by an organization, like the University of Paris or Vienna, had their costs paid for them. In the French delegation archbishops received ten francs daily for support, bishops eight, abbots five, and the lower prelates two or three.[2] The University of Vienna paid its representative, Peter de Pulk, according to his needs, and he was always begging for funds.[3] The Archbishop of Salzburg followed what was a common custom by giving his companions bread and meat at his own house in Constance.[4] The city authorities prepared to give civic aid to the poorest in their midst,[5] while many needy priests and scholars did manual labour in the moat, on the city walls, and in the neighbouring vineyards to earn a living.[6]

91. *Problems Confronting the Council*

Since the Council of Pisa had failed either to end the schism or to correct the innumerable ecclesiastical abuses, the reform movement in Europe gained momentum daily throughout Europe during the five years preceding the Council of Constance. The liberal reform party had adherents in all European lands, but the most conspicuous leaders were found in France and Germany.

Theodoric Vrie, an Augustinian monk from Saxony, a

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[1] Stuhr, 31.

[2] Mansi, xxvii, 517.

[3] *Archiv für Geschichtsquel.*, xv, Wien, 1856, 22, 28, 37, 38, 49, 57, 59, 61, 62.

[4] Hardt, i, 5, 161, 547 ; iv, 458–9 ; Richental, 47.

[5] Richental, 86.

[6] Ib., 86, 181–2 ; Stuhr, 29–30.

German historian and poet, in a Latin poem put the following words in the mouth of the divided and corrupted Church:—

"The Pope, once the wonder of the world, has fallen, and with him fell the heavenly temples, my members. Now is the reign of Simon Magus, and the riches of this world prevent just judgment. The Papal court nourishes every kind of scandal, and turns God's house into a market. The sacraments are basely sold; the rich man is honoured, the poor man despised; he who gives most is best received. Golden was the first age of the Papal court; then came the baser age of silver; next the iron age long set its yoke on the stubborn neck. Then came the age of clay. Could aught be worse? Aye, dung; and in dung sits the Papal court. All things are degenerate; the Papal court is rotten; the Pope himself, head of all wickedness, plots every kind of disgraceful scheme, and, while absolving others, hurries himself to death."[1]

Vrie[2] was present at the council and wrote a *History of the Council of Constance*, which he dedicated to Sigismund on 1st May, 1418. The work, written in poetry and prose, is in eight books, praises the German ruler to the skies, champions the cause of Gregory XII, repudiates the universal character of the Council of Pisa, and assails in an unmerciful manner the evils of the Church. He raised his voice in no uncertain tone against job-hunting, extravagant clothing, pluralism, sensuality, the poor education of the clergy, the large number of indulgences, immorality, curial greed for money, and the abuses in monasticism. "What shall I say of their luxury, when the facts themselves cry out most openly on the shameless lives of the prelates and priests! They spare neither condition nor sex; maidens and married men and those living in the world are all alike to them." Benefices which ought to provide alms for the poor have become the patrimony of the rich. One holds eighteen, another twenty, a third twenty-four; while the poor man is despised, his knowledge and holy life are of no account." The children of the powerful are provided for with benefices while still children through powerful influences and agencies.[3]

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[1] Hardt, i, pt. i, 11; Finke, *Forsch.*, 51.

[2] In 1419 Vrie was acting as instructor in theology at Cologne. Finke, *Forsch.*, 41.

[3] Hardt, i, 10, 69, 71; Finke, *Forsch.*, 39, 41, 42, 45, 48, 50.

Book I of Vrie's *History*[1] contrasts the early Church with the miserable condition of the Church before the Council of Constance. The ideal condition of the Church in the days of the Apostles and the early Fathers was recalled and the departure from the early model deplored. The Pope, cardinals, and prelates were infected with simony and the entire human race had degenerated beyond all created creatures. The earlier Church was purer because it was more sincere in faith and religion. With God's help and a revival of faith, the Church could still conquer in those calamitous times, but it must depend on Christ and trust him for guidance. The Church sang mournfully for the sons who were attempting to outgrow the present state of misery. At the conclusion of the book of poetry, were four discussions in prose, comparing the good and evil forces in the Church to Abel and Cain. Those who sought to perpetuate the schism were Cains, and that was the rôle played by the three schismatic Popes, who were lacerating the Church. God probably permitted the terrible schism to curse the Church on account of its evils.

Book II expressed the common hope that the Emperor Sigismund would correct the morals of the Church and end the schism, with the help of Christ, and thus restore the purity of the early Church. The fall of Adam was the source of all evils from which redemption could come only through Christ. The figures of Cain and Abel were again used. The Church was the Church of Christ even without the Pope. The causes of all the open evils were discussed and charged up to the schism. Sigismund was the one person who could correct the morals and bring unity.

Book III discussed the general solicitude of the whole Church for the evils and dangers of the schism. A terrible picture was drawn of simony. The humility and poverty of Christ was compared with the ambition and avarice of the rich Popes, cardinals and bishops. Those most unfit were named for important places in the Church. There was no justice or religious service without money. One had seventeen, another twenty, and another twenty-four benefices. Even children were granted benefices. The most unworthy were appointed. Idolatry prevailed because wealth and office were worshipped. The poor were robbed and that was sacrilege. Nepotism was rampant. Dispensations could be secured for any violation of ecclesiastical law, or irregularity. The Scriptures were not used and men did not personally accept God. The clergy were very keen for their own interests. Prelates were tyrants in handling Church property, and were not pastors, but bankers, who granted or condemned for money. Monks were just as bad as the priests. The general decline and decay were so bad that many had lost all hope of a recovery of the spiritual power of the Church. Mistresses and prostitutes were held by the clergy, who were worse than the princes. The clergy were wolves in their own flocks. The Pope was at the head of the whole evil system and responsible for all. Ignorance ruled in the Church, and worldly knowledge prevailed, so that princes made laws for the Church and ruled it. The ignorance of the Scriptures would make one weep. Out of ignorance grew tyranny and corruptions. Wisdom and knowledge, which Solomon advised, would save the Church, for they were the font of justice and the source of strength in conquering enemies. Ignorance was dangerous, and clergy and laity alike were too ignorant. Ignorance bred errors, heresy, schismatics, confusion, and lies. Christendom was afflicted with heretics like Wiclif and Huss because of the Schism, and the general neglect of the rites of the Church, even baptism.

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[1] It covers 227 folio pages in Hardt's *Concilium*, i, 2 ff. Book I is preceded by a letter of dedication to Sigismund.

Book IV asserted that the general council was the best means of eliminating the evils in the Church and of curing the Schism. Christ was the true reformer. In former days the general Council remedied schisms. The early schisms and the schismatic Popes were described down to the fifteenth century. Sigismund as emperor was duty bound to follow the example of former rulers in crushing schism. All the officers in the Church were guilty of simony and even the Pope was elected by simony. Bishops took money for ordination, and all would go to perdition on account of their simony, the source of all evil in the Church. Indulgences were so common that the devil himself could not keep track of them. Gregory VII was cited as opposed to simony. Only the Emperor could remove these curses from the Church. The power of the council was discussed. The Donation of Constantine was mentioned as the source of many ills from which the Church suffered. Benefices should be equalized. Monastic orders should be regulated. The histories of Wiclif and his forty-eight heresies and of Huss were given, and also that of Sangerhusen and his fifty errors.

Book V dealt with the obstacles which the council had to overcome in reforming the Church and in suppressing heresy, which all Christendom expected. Then followed the account of efforts to heal the schism and the results of the Council of Pisa with the well-known words, "I had two wives, now they have given me three."

Book VI continued to explain the difficult situation confronting the council. Let Christ who expiated the sins of Adam help the council to complete the work of reformation and union, which were promised. Then followed an account of the arrival of John XXIII and Sigismund at the council, a description of the attendance, the division into nations, and the proceedings up to the death of Huss and the recantation of Jerome.

Books VII and VIII continued the history of the council down to the election of Martin V in a very vivid and emphatic style. There is an account of the trickery of John XXIII; of Jerome of Prague's retraction of his retraction; of the rise of national discords; of an amusing contrast between the Apostle Peter and Peter de Lima; and of Sigismund's return and his insistence upon a reformation of the Church before the selection of a Pope. The work ends with an account of the life of Vrie.

Vrie declared that the Popes were elected "through avarice and simony", and the bishops were ordained for gold. The bishops, in turn, would not ordain those below them—the priests, deacons, sub-deacons, and acolytes—without a contract. The old proverb, "Freely give for freely ye have received," is vilely perverted into, "Freely I have not received, nor will I freely give, for I have bought my bishopric for a great price, and must indemnify myself for my sinful outlay."[2] Priests could secure ordination only for money. "If Simon Magus were now alive, he might buy with money not only the Holy Ghost, but God the Father, and Christ, the Son of God." These simoniacal bishops were denounced as "lepers with Gehasi", condemned to "perdition with Simon Magus", to whom Peter said: "Thy money perish with thee."[1]

Dietrich von Niem had served as secretary under Gregory

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[1] Hardt, i, 104–6.

XI at Avignon, and accompanied him to Rome in 1377. Under five Popes, from 1378 to 1410, he had been an official in the Papal court, and managed to secure a bishopric. He accompanied John XXIII to Constance and died there in 1417. No man of the period had a better opportunity than he to understand the weakness of the Papal power and to know of the abuses in the curia and elsewhere in the Church. He was an author of numerous tracts: *Nemus Unionis*, written about 1408, consisting of documents, letters, pamphlets, and notes for the two previous years; *Libri III de Schismate*, completed in 1410 with the coronation of John XXIII, in which he describes all the miseries resulting from the schism, the failure of Alexander V as Pope, and the keen disappointment in the election of John; *Vita Johannis XXIII*, which gives a biography of that Pope up to the time of his flight from the council, and then changes into a diary of the proceedings of the council; and *De modis uniendi et reformandi ecclesiam*, penned about 1410.[1]

In the last work mentioned, Niem first draws a distinction between the Catholic Church, which consists of all who believe in Christ, its head, and cannot err, and the Apostolic Church which is a sort of private Church composed of the Pope, cardinals, and prelates, and can err. The latter is related to the former as a species to a genus. Hence the Pope can have no rights as against the well-being of the larger, indivisible Church. The Papal primacy was won by fraud and usurpation. The idea that a Pope cannot be tried or judged by anyone is contrary to reason and the Bible. How can a Pope, a sinful man, possibly a peasant's son, become impeccable and infallible? Should the good of the Church demand it, he should resign, or even die. Hence to secure unity, the Church should compel the abdication of either two or all three of the Popes.

A general council represents the whole Church, and it can be called in case of necessity, by the prelates and princes. It has the power to rescind old laws and enact new ones, and the Pope is bound to obey them. The duty of making a thoroughgoing reformation of the Church, of abolishing simony, and of correcting the Pope, cardinals, and priests devolved upon the council. Hence the council should limit the powers which the Pope had usurped by invading the rights of the bishops, by monopolizing all matters in his curia, and by overthrowing the original constitution of the Church. The authority of the Pope must be reduced to its original limits, the abuses of the cardinals must be abolished, and the clergy must be purified. To accomplish these worthy objects, all good men must unselfishly co-operate, and the Emperor, who holds from God the power over the bodies of men, must give his support. The tract ends with a clear statement of the objects of the council: (1) to reincorporate the members of the universal Church; (2) to establish the recognition of one true and good Pope; (3) to define and limit the prerogatives of the Pope; (4) to restore the ancient constitution of the Church; (5) to pass laws concerning the Pope and the cardinals which will prevent a future schism; and (6) to reform completely the government and administration of the Church.[1]

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[1] Hardt, i, pt. iv.

If Niem reflected the thought and ideas of the liberal reform party of the period of the Council of Constance—and the actions of that body would support that conclusion—then it is evident that the theories set forth by the progressives of the previous century threatened the complete overthrow of the political organization of the Medieval Church by 1414. The secular authorities of Europe were operating towards the same end. Should the two forces unite under competent leadership, there was little doubt as to the revolutionary outcome.[2]

The French leaders were just as radical as the Germans in their insistence upon the necessity of healing the schism and of reformation, and also equally revolutionary in their definition of the powers of a general council. John Gerson had not attended the Council of Pisa, but he wrote two tracts, *De unitat e ecclesiastica* and *De auferbilitate papæ ab ecclesia*, in defending the necessity of unity and the power of the council to depose the two rival Popes. He took the ground that the Church was monarchically organized under its true head, Christ. There must be one Pope, not several, and bishops were not equal in authority to the Pope. In self-defence or from necessity the Church might separate itself from the Pope. The Papal office was of divine origin, and yet a council might depose the Pope against his consent, because all Church officers exist for the good of the Church, and a council alone possesses the power of the keys. Aristotle declared that the whole body had the right, in case of necessity, to depose its prince, hence the council possessed the same power, and whoever rejected the acts of a general council of the whole Church also rejected God who directed its proceedings. A Pope could be deposed for heresy and schism, even when no personal guilt was chargeable against him. At Constance Gerson advocated these radical ideas again and again in addresses in which he asserted that the Popes could be forced to abdicate, that the authority of the council was above that of the Pope, and that it alone possessed infallibility.[1]

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[1] Hardt, i, pt. iv; Du Pin, ii, 162–201. Finke has established this tract as the work of Niem, although it was formerly attributed to Gerson.

[2] Master Theodoric of the Münster monastery wrote in 1415 a most pointed tract on the superiority of the Church militant over the Pope. Finke, *Forsch.*, 301.

Peter d'Ailly, who had served in both the councils of Pisa and Rome, took the position that a council was superior to the Pope and could depose him. In 1411 he wrote *Capita agendorum*, in which he laid down a programme for the coming council. He held that both Pisa and Rome were universal councils, although he admitted that they might have erred, as other councils, reputed to be general councils, had done. He argued that the voice of the Council was valid only so long as it reflected faithfully the will of Christendom, that is the Church universal. But he held nevertheless that the council was superior to the Pope. He urged that Benedict XIII and Gregory XII must be heard, otherwise unity would not be obtained.[2] He played a leading rôle at Constance and upheld all the radical ideas of the reform party.[3] He was one of the three candidates for the Papacy after the three Popes were disposed of and his defeat was a serious disappointment to the French. [4]

Nicholas of Clemanges did not attend the Council of Constance, but he wrote a letter to that body urging unity of thought and action in unifying and purifying the Church. His previous writings on reform must have been known to all the leading men of the day. He upheld the infallibility of the council as the representative body of the Church, although he doubted whether general councils were always led by the Holy Spirit; God alone knew that.

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[1] Schwab, 520, 668.

[2] Poole, 146; Bess, 119.

[3] Hardt, ii, 201; Mansi, xxvii, 547; Finke, *Forsch.*, 117–32.

[4] Tschackert, *Ailli*, 295.

It must be remembered that these arguments in support of the conciliar theory, and the lamentations over the corruptions in the Church, together with the programmes for reformation, were not confined to such men as those whose ideas have just been quoted, but could be duplicated in every corner of Europe. Instead of being confined to a few enthusiasts, they came from all classes, were as wide as the Church itself, and were advocated by an overwhelming majority of the clergy, high and low, princes, and laity in the Council of Constance. The great problem before that body was how they could be made effective and carried out in some practical manner without destroying the institution of the Church.

92. *Organization and Appearance of the Liberal and Conservative Parties*

The opening day of the council had been fixed, 1st November, 1414, but the attendance was so small that John XXIII deferred the opening day to the 3rd, and in doing so pronounced it to be a continuation of Pisa. On the 3rd it was again postponed until the 5th, when the Pope with 15 cardinals, 2 patriarchs, 23 archbishops, and a goodly number of prelates solemnly opened the council by celebrating mass in the cathedral, and set the 16th as the beginning of the first session. John delivered an address urging measures for the peace of the Church.

Meanwhile a partial organization of the council took place. To John of course was conceded the right to serve as president and he filled that office during the first two sessions. The theologians were put to work to draw up proposals for the procedure of the council, and they suggested that Constance be modelled after Pisa in organization, hence it seems that notaries, procurators, advocates, proctors, promoters, and secretaries were appointed.[1] Apparently at the outset it was generally thought that the method of voting followed at Pisa would prevail at Constance. During these opening days carpenters prepared the interior of the cathedral for the sessions of the council and all public sessions were held there.

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[1] Stuhr, 39. 45, 47, 50.

On 10th November John issued an order that no one should leave the council without his permission and at the first session watches were appointed.[1] John hoped to have the *causa fidei*, or faith and heresy, taken up first and given priority over all other questions since reformation and union portended little advantage to himself.[2] The reform party saw the significance of that move, however, and urged that the first problem to be solved should be *causa unionis*, or the healing of the schism.[3]

On 16th November, at the first public session, John presided and preached a sermon from the text: "Speak ye every man the truth." Then a bull was read explaining the circumstances which necessitated the calling of a general council, showing its relation to the councils of Pisa and Rome, exhorting the members to root out heresy and to reform the Church, and guaranteeing freedom of discussion and action. And so the first day ended.

In the meantime two distinct parties, each with its own programme, were forming in the council:

1. The liberal, reform party, which opposed the leadership of John XXIII, insisted that the council should first give unity to the Church by getting rid of the schism, then inaugurate a complete reformation of the Church from Pope to parish priest, and finally take measures to crush heretical movements and safeguard the true faith for the future. They suggested that, in order to offset John's strength in the multitude of Italian bishops under his thumb, the method of voting be changed, and hence proposed that instead of permitting each higher prelate to cast a vote the council organize by nations and should allow each nation to designate its vote. This revolutionary proposal would introduce political and lay elements into the deliberations of the council as the decisive factors. This party also advocated the radical change in the constitution of the church so as to limit the power of the Papacy and transfer supreme authority from the Pope to the general council. The leaders of this party came from Germany and France. Peter d'Ailly arrived at Constance on 17th November and the party at once began to crystallize about him as the recognized head.

2. The conservative Papal party was to a considerable degree a purely personal party under the dominance of the

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[1] Hardt, iv, 19. [2] Hübler, *Konstanzer*, 1. [3] Hardt, ii, 208, 233.

wily and powerful Pope John XXIII. His supreme purpose was to eliminate Benedict and Gregory, his two rivals, as pretenders, and to insure his own recognition as the constitutional head of united Christendom. By increasing the college of cardinals and by elevating many Italians to episcopal rank, he planned to have a party at Constance sufficiently strong numerically to carry his recommendations. He refused to entertain any suggestions of diminishing Papal prerogatives, or of increasing the powers of the council, and he fought all suggestions of a change in the method of voting. Like a political boss, he sent his henchmen out to gather up the gossip of his opponents secretly, but he was not wise enough to keep his own counsel. Besides he trusted entirely too much to his official position as a decisive factor in the disputes which were bound to arise.

The first conflict between the two parties occurred on 19th November, when cardinal Ragusa, the legate of Gregory XII, arrived, took up his residence at the Augustinian convent, and set up above the door the arms of Gregory. That night John had the emblem of his rival torn down.[1] The next day a congregation was called to consider the question. The Papal party took the ground that since the Council of Pisa had deposed Gregory, he was no longer Pope, and could not use the Papal coat of arms. The liberal party, on the other hand, repudiated this sweeping statement, but agreed that the arms should not be used unless the Pope was present in person. D'Ailly asserted that Gregory and Benedict would have to be considered and treated with as having some claims.

On 7th December the Papal party sought to commit the council to a programme of procedure by presenting to the congregation a series of propositions as follows: (1) that matters of faith and heresy should take precedence over all other questions and should be settled first; (2) that the acts of Pisa should be confirmed as valid; (3) that John XXIII be empowered to proceed, by force if necessary, against Gregory XII and Benedict XIII in order to eliminate them in the interest of unity; (4) that the Pope should call a council every ten years; and (5) that simony should be abolished and other reforms instituted.[2] John even went so far as to appoint a commission to suggest means for suppressing the Hussite heresy.[3] The clear intent of this scheme was to

[1] Loserth, 467.

[2] Hardt, iv, 25.

[3] Ib., 12.

waste the time of the council in a discussion of the heresies of Wiclif and Huss until the members were worn out and then dismiss the council with a few trivial reforms.

The liberal party, under D'Ailly's guidance, clearly saw the purpose of the Papal party. It agreed that Constance was a continuation of Pisa, but insisted that the purpose of Constance was to give the Church union and reformation. Whoever spoke of dissolving the council before those objects were accomplished was guilty of schism and heresy. Four of the old cardinals bluntly told John that the first reforms needed were in his household and in his personal conduct. He ought to have fixed hours for religious duties, which should not be neglected; he should avoid simony and perform the duties of his office in a businesslike manner; in public he should dress and act like a Pope; he should stop gossiping with irresponsible persons and in a dignified manner honestly preside over and co-operate with the council.[1] This was plain talking, and should have left no one in doubt as to the determination of the reform party.

A few days later D'Ailly read a memoir suggesting that the cause of union could be best secured by proceeding mildly and discreetly against the two old pretenders. To make their resignation easy, he proposed the appointment of a commission by the council composed of representatives of the different nations to confer with them and to arrange terms of resignation. The Papal party howled down this proposition, and declared that it would invalidate the authority of the Council of Pisa. D'Ailly was forced in consequence, to fall back on the ground that a general council might err not only in act and law, but even in faith, and to assert the principle that councils were infallible only so far as they embodied in their decrees the universal consciousness of truth and thus represented the real faith and heart of Christendom.[2] Unable to settle these differences of opinion, it was decided to postpone them until the coming of Sigismund.

The arrival of Sigismund on 25th December immediately produced a more definite alignment of parties. In the first place the Emperor, in no uncertain terms, let it be known that he cast in his lot with the liberal reform party. On 29th December he presented a statement to the council from his ambassadors to Benedict and Gregory and the King of Aragon asking the council to await the arrival of the envoys of the two Papal claimants. On 4th January, 1415, D'Ailly succeeded in carrying a motion that the envoys be received in their cardinals' hats. On the 12th of the same month representatives from Benedict and the King of Aragon proposed that Sigismund go to Nice to confer with the Pope and monarch about the best means of closing the schism, but the council made no reply at the time. On 25th January Gregory's ambassadors were courteously received by Sigismund and the council, and the next day Lewis of Bavaria promised to obtain Gregory's resignation on two conditions, namely (1) that Gregory be invited to attend the council, and (2) that John did not preside over the council.

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[1] Creighton, i, 310.

[2] Hardt, ii, 201.

The Papal party, urged on by John, vehemently opposed these arrangements. They strongly objected to receiving the envoys of the anti-Popes as cardinals, on the ground that both of them had been legally deposed by the Council of Pisa. They also insisted that the right of John to preside over the council could not be discussed inasmuch as he was the true Pope, whom all were bound to obey, and anxious to do all within his power to reform and purify the Church. For some days John had not appeared at the assemblies, although he had adroitly attempted to control the situation through his spokesmen in the conservative party. He did appear on 1st February, however, on the occasion of the canonization of St Briget, to conduct the services. He must have realized that his party was rapidly losing the ascendancy it had possessed and exercised on the opening days of the synod.

At this juncture, when the council was groping in inactivity for some sensible and practical way out of the dilemma in which circumstances placed it, William Filastre, a learned French prelate, dean of Reims, whom John had elevated to cardinalship, who kept a valuable diary during the council, and who was an honoured member of the liberal party, wrote out and circulated a proposal which cleared the atmosphere and pointed out the only logical line of action. He suggested that the surest and quickest means of insuring unity was the voluntary abdication of all three Popes. John, as the follower and representative of the Good Shepherd, who would lay down His life for His sheep, was bound to follow Christ and lay down his dignities. Since it was his duty to do that, if he refused to make the sacrifice for the welfare of the Church, the council might compel him to resign. But first John should be humbly asked to follow that course and, if he complied, assured of an honourable position in the Church. The memoir was widely circulated and was given the unqualified endorsement of the liberal party. Sigismund openly expressed his approval of the proposition. Filastre boldly visited John and told him that he had acted conscientiously for the good of the whole Church, and urged the Pope to follow his advice before it was too late.

John professed surprise and anger at this treasonable attack from his own cardinal, and inspired several answers to Filastre's recommendation. In the replies the old argument was reiterated that it was unjust to rank a legitimate Pope with the two pretenders, condemned by the Council of Pisa as schismatics and heretics, otherwise the legality of the Council of Pisa would be destroyed.

The shrewd D'Ailly then stepped into the arena with a clever modification of Filastre's plan to clear the field for union. He recognized the validity of all that had been done at Pisa, and consequently the legitimacy of John's claim to be the only true Pope. But he argued that the adherents of Benedict and Gregory refused to admit the constitutionality of the acts of Pisa, so the Church was confronted by the stubborn fact that the schism still existed. Hence all the reasons advanced at Pisa in support of mutual abdication, as the best means of healing the schism, applied with still greater force at Constance, when there were three claimants. In urging John's abdication D'Ailly made it clear that he did not class him with the two deposed Popes; on the contrary, he declared that John's voluntary abdication for the "good of the Church" would, through this very act of self-sacrifice, put him high above the two deposed schismatics. Nevertheless he held that if John refused to save his character by resigning of his own free will, the council might compel him to surrender his office, simply on the basis of expediency as the most efficacious way of procuring unity without preferring charges against him.[1]

John saw the dangerous situation with great vividness, but, loving power as he did, he could not bring himself to follow D'Ailly's wise counsel. He had used his power of appointment and had spent his money liberally to secure votes.

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[1] Hardt, ii, pt. viii, contains these documents.

The fifteen cardinals and the fifty bishops who owed their honours to John, together with his other supporters, about 100 altogether, formed a very formidable party, particularly if the old method of allowing only bishops and abbots to vote was followed. John and his party insisted that that ancient custom be followed in Constance, and hoped thereby to control the actions of the council. This hope in John's breast was one of the strong reasons why he was obstinate about abdicating.

93. *Revolutionary Method of Voting by Nations*

If heads were counted, according to the legal practice as established by precedent, the liberal leaders feared, and with very good reason too, that John might win. The learned and skilful D'Ailly explained, therefore, that in the early councils, bishops and abbots alone voted simply because they most truly represented the Christian community of that day. But times had changed so that in the fifteenth century priors and heads of congregations were more really representative than titular abbots, who represented no one. In addition in ancient days doctors of theology and law, and universities, were unknown, hence they ought now to be admitted to franchise as had been recognized at Pisa. Kings and princes were likewise deeply interested in the unity of the Church, hence it would be absurd to exclude them or their ambassadors. The representatives of absent prelates and chapters should also be given a vote.[1] Filastre went even further and insisted that all clergy were really the same, though differing in rank, and hence priests and monks should also be given a vote. In advocating this democratic and revolutionary view he declared: "An ignorant king or bishop is no better than a crowned ass."[2] The various nations, it was urged, were all equally interested in solving the great questions before the council. Why should the huge crowd of Italians at Constance be permitted to have a vote out of all proportion to the interests and people they represented, while the English, who were relatively few in number at the council, yet just as important a portion of Christendom, be cut off with a small vote? To the English bishop, Robert Hallam, is due the credit of suggesting the novel, but equitable, solution of the perplexing situation. To the Germans he proposed that the council adopt the system which prevailed in the various European universities, particularly that of Paris, and organize itself by nations. The English and Germans demanded, therefore, that an equal number of deputies from each nation should have the final decision on all important matters. The French gave their support to this plan on 17th February, and the Italians, powerless to resist, acquiesced within a week. So, apparently without any decree of the council, this new form of constitution on a national basis was established. The following nations were each given one vote:

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[1] Finke, *Forsch.*, 30.

[2] In declaring that all the clergy were on an equal basis, Filastre said that only the Pope stood above them. An abbot might rule over 10 or 20 monks, yet he was given a vote, while priests in Germany, France, England, and Spain often cared for 10,000 souls, so why omit them? Kings and princes were forced to deal with the problem of union, and priests with the problems of reforms and faith, so why not let both classes vote? Procurators of absent prelates should also be counted. Finke, 30–1.

1. The Italians, who numbered about 300 representatives, and included Cyprus, Constantinople, Bosnia, Turkey, and Tartary.
2. The Germans, with whom were united the Bohemians, Hungarians, Poles, Danes, Scandinavians, Croatians, and Russians.
3. The French, who had about 200 delegates.[1]
4. The English, who had only 20 members, of whom but nine were prelates, included Scots, the Medes, Persians, Arabs, Indians, Ethiopians, Egyptians, and Ninevah.
5. The Spaniards, who did not join the council, however, until 1417, represented Portugal and Sicily.[2]

The cardinals demanded a vote as a separate body, but their request was refused, so they met with the several nations and were limited to the same rights enjoyed by other members.[3] Each nation organized by choosing a certain number of deputies composed of both clergy and laity, and these deputies of the several nations met separately under their own presidents, chosen monthly, to debate the various problems as they arose and to decide how their vote would be cast. Each nation had a chief clerk and other minor officers. After the nations consulted separately and arrived at a decision, a congregation of the nations was held and each nation cast its vote on the question under consideration. The action of the congregation of nations was then presented to the general council for formal ratification. The sources speak clearly of a standing committee of the nations, and Cardinal Filastre in his diary, after mentioning the committee on reform, says: "There was also another committee, called the general committee, whose members had much to do," in which the Patriarch of Antioch and Robert Hallam were the leading spirits.[1] The functions of this standing committee are not clear, but it apparently prepared subjects for the individual nations to discuss and acted as general mediary and means of international communication.[2]

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[1] Hardt, ii, 244.

[2] Richental, 38–9, gives the various groupings (Brandt ed.); Hardt, iv, 935.

[3] There is some reason for believing that for a short time the cardinals sat as a body, but on 2nd May, 1415, their right to vote as a separate body was withdrawn. Finke, *Forsch.*, 37: Souchon, ii, 194.

This change in the method of voting was most revolutionary and unprecedented in the evolution of the Church. Clearly it was believed that the constitution of the Medieval Church had been outgrown, and must, therefore, be replaced by a constitution that was not alone more democratic but at the same time more truly representative of the new forces in the Christian civilization of Western Europe. The universities, the national states, and the laity were given a voice—indeed one might say, a determining voice, in the council. While it is true that the immediate purpose in this innovation was the determination of the liberal party to overthrow the power of John XXIII, who had packed the council in his own interest, still the fundamental intention was plainly to put the conciliar theory into practical and effective operation and to make the council more truly representative of all important interests in Christendom. The motives were commendable, but resulted in the transformation of a genuine ecclesiastical council into an international congress, which succeeded, it is true, in thwarting the schemes of John to retain his office at the expense of his two rivals and in giving the Church unity, but failed deplorably in all efforts to give the Church that reformation which was essential to its greatest usefulness as the spiritual guide of Europe. The whole project was such a wide departure from what was known to be the law and practice of the Church that in the end D'Ailly and Filastre who had merely wished to extend the franchise to doctors and more of the clergy, disapproved of the organization by nations.[3] No council before or since Constance, except the unimportant council of Siena in 1423, ever voted that way.

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[1] Finke, *Forsch.*, 36, 194, 218; Stuhr, 61.
[2] Ib.
[3] Ib., 52.

94. *The Deposition of John XXIII*

The victory of the liberal party in organizing the vote of the council by nations completely frustrated John's hopes and plans. Had John possessed an unsullied personal character, and had he won the confidence of France, Germany, and England sufficiently to lead them to believe that he honestly championed a genuine and adequate reformation of the Church from top to bottom, he might easily have won a victory over his two rivals and emerged from the council stronger than ever.[1] At first the council had seemed rather favourable to John's claims, but as the days passed and more members arrived, opposition to John found expression and organization in the reform party. By January, 1415, the idea of the resignation of all three Popes as the best means of clearing the field for a positive union spread rapidly. The tracts of D'Ailly and Filastre crystallized that idea into a deep conviction.[2] After organizing by nations the first question taken up by the national deputations was the Schism. The English, French, and Germans favoured a common abdication of all three Popes, and so voted in a congregation of the four nations on 15th February. The Italians, outvoted three to one, were forced to give a reluctant consent. In the meantime, during these discussions, in order to influence the sentiment in favour of John's abdication, there appeared from the hand of an Italian prelate an anonymous and libelous tract purporting to give an unvarnished list of the dreadful sins and unspeakable crimes of John's life. It was so indecent and damnatory that the wise men of the council suggested that for the sake of the Church it ought to be suppressed. But it accomplished its purpose: the hostility to John was increased, and John himself, upset and unnerved, lost his spirit of bravado, and consulted with his cardinals as to whether he had better not confess what was true in it and throw himself upon the generous mercy of the council, but they advised against it.

When John was informed of the vote of the nations for his abdication, he readily consented and submitted a form of abdication, which was immediately considered by the nations, but rejected as too vague. He offered a second, but that likewise was rejected, because it condemned his two rivals as heretics. Then on 28th February the Germans proposed a third form, which was modified by the French so as to include the phrase "swear and vow", and the nations in congregation unanimously adopted it.[1] On 1st March it was presented in the presence of Sigismund and deputies of the nations to John, who, feeling the strong tide that had set in against him and fearing that the council would depose him, accepted it in good grace remarking that he had come to Constance to give peace to the Church.

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[1] Loserth, 468.

[2] Hardt, ii, 208–31.

In the second general session of the council held on 2nd March, John, after celebrating mass, read his promise of abdication in a loud clear voice: "I, Pope John XXIII, for the repose of the whole Christian people, profess, engage, promise, swear and vow to God, the Church, and this holy council, willingly and freely to give peace to the Church by the way of my simple cession of the Papacy, and to do this and fulfil it effectually according to the determination of this present council, whenever, and as soon as, Peter de Luna and Angelo Corario, called in their respective obediences Benedict XIII and Gregory XII, shall in like manner cede the Papacy, to which they pretend, either in person or by their lawful proctors, or even in any case of vacancy by decease or otherwise, when by my cession unity can be restored to the Church of God through the expiration of the present schism."[2] At the words "swear and vow" John knelt down at the altar and remained kneeling until he had finished reading his obligation. The council was wild with joy. Sigismund removed his crown, threw himself at the Pope's feet, kissed them, and expressed his gratitude, and the Patriarch of Antioch did the same in the name of the council, whose members broke out in expressions of thanksgiving and tears. The city reflected the spirit of the council and the clanging of bells announced the glad news to the outside world that peace and unity were at hand.

After the excitement subsided, the leaders of the reform party, still suspicious of John and feeling that the victory won was too good to be true, sought to bind the Pope irrevocably by persuading him to embody his resignation in a bull. John treated that proposition as an insult, but Sigismund extorted from him on 7th March a bull renewing his sacred promise, although it was couched in guarded terms. Since John's abdication depended upon the simultaneous abdication of his two rivals, Sigismund and representatives of the council were chosen by the Germans, French, and English in full congregation to go to Nice to persuade Benedict to abdicate, as his ambassadors had earlier suggested. At the same time John was asked to appoint the Emperor and the prelates who were to accompany him as proctors with full power to resign in his behalf. This was the test of John's sincerity and revealed his real purpose and true character. He evidently had no intention to put himself unreservedly in the hands of the council. He adroitly proposed to go in person to meet Benedict. The Italians threatened to leave the council if such humiliating demands were forced upon their leader. John sought to mollify Sigismund by bestowing upon him on 10th March the consecrated golden rose, a rare and always significant gift for conspicuous service to the Church. The German monarch accepted it, but instead of keeping it for himself, offered it to the Virgin in the cathedral. These acts of John only resulted in arousing more suspicion against him. In a congregation held on 11th March, over which Sigismund presided, the question of electing a new Pope, after the three claimants abdicated was raised. The Archbishop of Mainz protested that he could obey no one but John XXIII, still the suggestion of choosing a new head of Christendom clearly reveals the status of John and the mind of the council. John was determined to take no steps to carry out his promised resignation; Sigismund as the leader of the reform party was resolved to force him to do so. The old accusations against John's character were openly gossipped about on all sides,[1] and it was charged that he was contemplating flight for the purpose of dissolving the council, and thus defeating its purposes. To prevent such a disaster Sigismund ordered the city gates to be closely guarded. John protested to the city authorities and to the council against this breach of safe-conduct which all enjoyed. Frederick of Austria, who had arrived at Constance on 18th February, blustered around and swore that he at least would keep the safe-conduct which he had promised to the Pope.[2]

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[1] Hardt, ii, 240.

[2] Milman, vii, 462.

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[1] Finke, *Forsch.*, 148, mentions a MS. found in Vienna in which it was reported that John agreed to give up the Papacy for 30,000 gulden.

[2] Hardt, iv, 55.

It was quite apparent that a crisis was approaching. On 14th March Sigismund summoned a congregation of the French, Germans, and English and a demand was made of John to appoint proctors to carry out his promise of abdication. He was requested likewise to promise neither to dissolve the council nor to allow any one to leave Constance until union had been given the Church. Sigismund, asserting that he meant to observe his safe-conduct, yet fearing that the council might disperse, explained that the gates had been guarded at the suggestion of some of the cardinals. John, driven into a corner, agreed not to dissolve the council, but suggested its transference to some place near Nice, so that he might meet Benedict personally. Words ran high and wire-pulling was worked to the limit. The Germans and English were intent upon forcing John to appoint proctors. The French, under the influence of D'Ailly, resented the high-handed interference of Sigismund and the Anglo-German alliance, and now opposed the effort to compel John to name proctors. D'Ailly even proposed that the system of voting by nations be given up and that the old method be employed. The Anglo-German party was enraged at the desertion of the French to the Italians, and a serious breach, which threatened the premature ending of the council, was averted only when the ambassadors of the French King announced that he wished John to appoint proctors and not dismiss the council.

On 19th March, in a congregation the English proposed that John be seized and held as a prisoner. The wily Italian Pontiff had meanwhile been maturing plans for escape from Constance. That same evening Sigismund visited John and extracted from him the promise not to quit Constance until the dissolution of the council. To his servants after the visit John denounced the Emperor in foul terms and declared that he had sought to extract a big bribe for keeping him in the Papal office.[1] The next day, while all Constance was outside the city gates attending a tournament arranged by Frederick of Austria, probably for this very purpose, John in the disguise of a groom, disregarding his oath, escaped from the city without any difficulty, and rode to Ermantingen, where he took boat to Schaffhausen, a town belonging to his accomplice, Frederick, who left Constance the same evening to join the Pope. Some of the cardinals, seven in all, fled to Schaffhausen to join John, and he summoned his Curia to join him there within six days, under penalty of excommunication.[1] The most influential cardinals like D'Ailly and Zabarella remained in Constance, although it seems that for some time they absented themselves from the session of the council.

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[1] Hardt, ii, 395; Martène-Durand, *Amp. Coll.*, ii, 1444; Müller, *Gesch. Schweizerischer Eidengenossenschaft*, iii, 28, n.

In the meantime John wrote the following letter to Sigismund: "By the grace of God we are free and in an agreeable atmosphere at Schaffhausen, where we came unknown to our son, Frederick of Austria, with no intention of going back on our promise of abdicating to promote the peace of the Church, but that we may carry it out in freedom and with regard to our health."[2] At the same time he wrote to the University of Paris, the King of France, the Duke of Orleans, the Duke of Berni, and the King of Poland to arouse their sympathy and support. He sought to arouse the French national spirit by asserting that France had been slighted in the council, because France and Italy with 200 prelates each were given the same vote as England with only three prelates. God dealt with individuals, not nations. He complained that married laymen were given votes equally with the higher clergy, and that the heretic John Huss had not been tried.[3] The turbulent council, organized by nations, had hissed down holy cardinals. The tyrannical Emperor had usurped the presidency of the council and had heaped insults upon the head of the lawful ruler of the Church. The English were particularly insolent and had threatened his arrest. And finally he gave himself the lie by acknowledging that Frederick of Austria had assisted him to escape from Constance.[4] These letters availed John nothing, for they were handed over to the council.[5]

By evening the news of John's flight was known and swept over the city like a hurricane. A panic ensued among the members of the council. A mob formed and rushed to the Pope's palace to plunder it. Merchants packed their goods for fear of a riot. Grief and disappointment were expressed on all sides, and most men thought the council had come to an end; and it might have had a short and unsuccessful career had John boldly gone to the length of issuing a bull before leaving ordering the immediate dissolution of the council. Just why he did not do so is not easy of explanation. Sigismund, however, by prompt and decisive action, saved the day. He fully comprehended the crisis and immediately ordered the burgomaster to arm the citizens and thus preserved order. On the following morning he rode through the streets urging all to keep the peace and take heart and promising that John would be brought back to Constance. Meanwhile, he said, if any one wished to follow the Pope he was free to do so. Then he called a general congregation of the nations to whom he declared that he would protect the council, that he would use every effort even unto death to give the Church unity, and that the blame for the unfortunate situation rested upon Frederick of Austria who would have to answer for his evil work. The college of cardinals sent three of their number to overtake John for the purpose of persuading him not to dissolve the council and to appoint proctors to carry out his resignation.

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[1] Loserth, 468; Finke, *Forsch.*, 85.

[2] Hardt, ii, 252.

[3] Ib.; Bourg. du Chastenet, 318. The council's letters of defence are given in Hardt, iv, 108, 129.

[4] Hardt, ii, 257.

[5] Creighton, i, 330.

Feeling ran high and the leaders of the council were keenly conscious of the critical condition confronting them. Therefore, in order to make no false or foolish move, Gerson, the most learned theologian in the council, was requested to preach a sermon clearly defining the authority of the council, before the departure of the deputation of cardinals to meet John. It was desirable, likewise, to free the council from absolute dependence upon Sigismund. The sermon was delivered on 23rd March, and in it he set forth the revolutionary maxims:

1. Christ is the true head of the Church, the Pope only a secondary head.

2. The union of Christ with the Church is indissoluble, that of the Pope dissoluble.

3. A Pope is necessary to complete the Church, but a particular Pope may be removed.

4. A general council represents the Church guided by the Holy Ghost and may enact laws which the Pope cannot annul and must obey.

5. A council may be called in case of need without the

authority of a legitimate Pope, and for the ending of a schism may command the abdication of a Pope.

6. The reformation of the Church both in faith and discipline rests ultimately with a council, hence it ought to be called from time to time as the supreme power of the Church.[1]

The representatives of the University of Paris went a step farther and asserted:

1. That John could not dissolve the council without its consent since it represented the whole Church and the will of the whole Church was superior to the voice of the Pope.
2. That the council could, if necessary, invoke the secular arm to protect it and to carry out its wishes.
3. That the Pope holds his office from and through the Church, hence the council could depose a wicked or dangerous Pope, just as it would be right to take a sword from the hands of a madman.

All the nations, even the Italians, seemed to approve of these views which, radically revolutionary though they undoubtedly were, had been gradually developed since the days of Boniface VIII.

On 25th March the Archbishop of Reims returned to Constance with a letter from John to Sigismund, in which he explained that he had not left the council through fear, but merely to recover his health in a change of air. He proposed, in case his two rivals abdicated, to appoint as proctors to carry out his resignation either the whole body of cardinals, or a commission of seven, three cardinals and four prelates, one from each of the nations, three of whom would be authorized to act. To such an extent had John's support in the council dwindled, that his offer was not even considered. The next day, 26th March, a congregation of the nations was held to formulate resolutions defining the council's position, which were to be presented before the session of the council the same day. The decrees asserting that the council had been duly and constitutionally assembled, that it was not dissolved by the Pope's flight, that it ought not to dissolve until the Schism was ended and the whole Church reformed, that it could not be transferred to another place without its consent, and that no prelates should leave the council until its work was completed, were voted by an overwhelming *placet*.

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[1] Creighton, i, 329.

The cardinals were placed in a very trying dilemma. They felt duty bound to uphold the claims of John until he openly set himself in opposition to the council; at the same time the leaders among them sympathized with the purposes of the council and sought to avert an open breach. They had absented themselves from the council on 23rd March, when Gerson preached his forceful sermon, although Sigismund had a full report of it sent to them. They hoped for some compromise through the three cardinals sent to advise with John. They received no summons to the congregation held on 26th March, and were handed a copy of the decrees only shortly before the session of the council opened. They clearly saw the dangerous spirit which threatened to override the power and authority of both Pope and cardinals in holding a session of the council without the presence of either. They were not unwilling to see the monarchical organization of the Church weakened, but now the oligarchical principle which they had championed was attacked by a democratic national movement. Consternation broke out among them, they lost their heads and were unable to act in a bold, dignified manner in support of their own prerogatives, or to gain control over the rebellious council. Consequently some of them hastily left to rejoin John; others feigned illness, until some turn in events might give them an opportunity to act; only two of them, D'Ailly and Zabarella, possessed the wisdom and courage to attempt to preserve the rights and dignity of their high office. They attended the session of the council on 26th March and firmly insisted upon the recognition of the prerogatives due to their rank and office. As a result D'Ailly was invited to celebrate mass and to preside over the council, while Zabarella read the revolutionary decrees which were passed.

The cardinals, in order to preserve their prerogatives and to resist the invasion of their rights, which the council threatened, set forth a series of ten theses against the resolutions of the fourth and fifth sessions of the council:—

1. The Roman Church was composed of the Pope and cardinals.

2. The Roman Church is master and head of all Churches.

3. The Roman Church is above the general council in authority.

4. The Roman Church, like the council, derives its power directly from God.

5. The Pope must preside over the general council to make it valid.

6. The Roman Church plus the general council equals the Universal Church.

7. The cardinals in electing a Pope were acting for the Universal Church.

8. The consent of the Roman Church was essential to the validity of all decrees of the general council.

9. Self-reformation was incumbent upon the Pope and cardinals.

10. Reformation of the whole Church was to be accomplished by the Roman Church and the general council.[1]

Zabarella had read the protest in behalf of himself and his colleague explaining why they could not desert John so long as he worked for the peace of the Church, why they believed the session of 26th March should not have been held, and why they hoped John would confirm what had been done by the council. So highly were these two cardinals regarded, that their shrewd appeal prevented a breach between the council and the sacred college which would have been disastrous. Loud threats had been made to rob the cardinals of all power and many tracts had appeared against them.[2] In the national organization of the council, the college of cardinals seemed to lose their identity.

On 27th March before a congregation of the nations, the three cardinals who had gone as envoys to John at Schaffhausen, reported the Pope's offer to appoint the cardinals as his proctors and to give power to any two of them to carry out his promise of abdication even against his will. He also agreed not to dissolve the council until a perfect union was secured. And he demanded security for his own person and indemnity for the Archduke of Austria. The reform party now in an overwhelming majority had lost all faith in John and proceeded to draw up more decrees establishing the authority of the council without the Pope. In vain the alarmed cardinals offered new concessions on behalf of the Pope. The council, feeling its importance more than ever after the flight of John, and anxious for a decisive action on the vital problems before it, was determined to proceed, in spite of Pope and cardinals, to assert the supremacy of a general council over the Pope.

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[1] Finke, *Forsch.*, 94–5.

[2] Ib., 81.

The fourth session of the council was held on 30th March, and the members were in no mood to brook opposition. The cardinals had threatened to absent themselves unless the decrees were modified, and had begged Sigismund to effect some compromise, but all availed nothing and those cardinals in Constance except D'Ailly and Viviers, finally attended the session, although with reluctance. Zabarella was handed the decrees to be read: (1) That the council was lawfully assembled and represented the sovereign Church which derived its power from Christ; (2) that every one must obey it, even the Pope, in matters of faith and union "and general reformation of the Church of God in head and members"; (3) that the Pope could neither transfer nor dissolve it; and (4) that all acts of the Pope to the detriment of the council were null and void.[1] Believing that the council did not possess the power to reform the college of cardinals, Zabarella purposely omitted the clause dealing with reformation. An uproar followed and in confusion the session ended. The anger of the council broke out with renewed vigour against the cardinals, and in a pamphlet from a German pen they were charged with conspiring with John against the council and with being worse than the tyrant, homicide, simoniac, and immoral monster whom they had chosen as Pope.[2] Deputies were named to confer with Zabarella in order to placate him, but with no thought of modifying the decrees.

To leave no doubt concerning the decrees, at the fifth session, over which John of Ursinus presided as over the fourth,[3] on 6th April, they were again presented and approved, and two new decrees were added, namely, that the council had the power to punish anyone refusing to obey its measures, and that John had enjoyed full liberty while at Constance.[4] The last act was occasioned by the fact that John on 29th March had drawn up a protest before a notary that all his vows, oaths, and promises made at Constance had been extracted from him through fear of bodily violence, and then had fled to Laufenburg, thirty miles down the Rhine, while his loyal cardinals returned to Constance. He had at last thrown off his mask and justified the suspicions of the council. He realized that his sun had set and he was ready to try the chances of open war with the council. Sigismund was urged by the council to seize him and bring him back to Constance. On 7th April the ban of the Empire and the excommunication of the council were hurled against his accomplice and protector, Frederick of Austria, who was forced to throw himself upon Sigismund's mercy before the month had expired.[1]

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[1] Hardt, iv, 89; Mansi, xxvii, 585; Hübler, 381.

[2] Hardt, ii, 285; Finke, 91.

[3] Hardt, iv, 19, 74.

[4] Mansi, xxvii, 590; Mirbt, 3rd ed., p. 169, No. 317.

The council now proceeded to act in a stately and determined manner. A general session on 17th April sent a letter to all the kings and princes of Europe describing the Pope's flight, asserting his complete freedom at Constance, lamenting the sad conditions of the Church under his leadership, and announcing the council's determination to force his return to Constance. The council drew up an agreement for John to sign in which he named proctors to complete his abdication, and appointed cardinals Filastre and Zabarella as envoys to carry it to him. They were to order John to return to Constance within two days, or to go to Ulm, Ravensburg, or Basel, until his abdication was accomplished. On this same date the first great commission composed of eleven members, two representing the cardinals, three from France, and two each from the other three nations, was appointed to supervise the abdication.[2] Filastre and Zabarella on 23rd April found John, who had meanwhile fled from one place to another, at Breisach and presented the council's orders. John promised to reply the next day, but instead sneaked away to Neuenburg and then to Freiburg, where the cardinals overtook him and again presented the commands. John, cowed and sullen, realizing the hopelessness of his position, said he would send his proctors in a few days. The envoys returned to Constance on 29th April to report the results of their mission.

The omnipotent council on 2nd May cited John to appear before it to answer charges of "heresy, schism, simony, maladministration, waste of Church property and scandals caused to the Church by his life and character". An armed force of 300 men accompanied the deputies on 9th May to deliver the summons to John in person. He sought to avoid appearing in person and appointed cardinals D'Ailly, Zabarella and Filastre as proctors to act for him, but they refused to serve. On 13th May the council ruled that John must appear himself.

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[1] Zössmair, *Flucht von Konst.*, 10.

[2] Hardt, iv, 117.

The next day he was declared guilty of contumacy and was suspended from the Papal office. The cardinals approved of this judgment.[1] To proceed with the formal trial of the obstinate Pontiff by drawing up charges and examining witnesses, a commission of fourteen members—two from England, three cardinals, and three from each of the other three nations—was appointed.[2] From John's public and private life seventy-two grave charges were drawn up indicting him for nearly every crime known to civilized society. As a youth he was unchaste, given to vice, untruthful and disobedient to his parents. He had made his way in the world by deceit, trickery, bribery, and underhanded means. He had poisoned Alexander V to obtain the Papal office, despised the rites of religion like a pagan, oppressed the poor, robbed the churches, led a life stained by carnal indulgences, and was a vessel of every kind of sin. He was guilty of simony, sold the same offices repeatedly, even to children, carried on an illegal traffic in spurious bills, and stole the head of John the Baptist in order to sell it to Florence for 50,000 ducats. He committed adultery with his brother's wife, violated nuns and virgins, and committed other nameless vices. He denied a future life, was not guided in his life by religious principles, and taught heresy.[3] Of the charges sixteen were so unspeakably vile that for sheer shame they were dropped before the list was presented to the council. Many of the accusations were untrue, but it is a very significant fact that the council dared to make such assertions against a Pope, because it shows how greatly the respect for the Papal office had fallen.[4] The indictment, apart from its rancorous tone, was a terrible one.

While John's trial was proceeding, he was seized by soldiers, brought to within eight miles of Constance, and there held under guard. On 20th May envoys of the council announced to him his suspension from office, and demanded the surrender of the insignia of his office, namely, the Papal seal and ring. John, penitent and in tears, gave them up. On 25th May the fifty-six charges against him, together with the number and character of the witnesses establishing the truth of each accusation, were presented to the council. Each nation elected one proctor to vote on the truth of the charges. The college of cardinals was also permitted to select a proctor to convey the assent of that body.[1] Five cardinals were sent to John to inform him of his probable deposition, and brought back a statement saying that he would submit to any decision of the council and begging only that his honour and person be respected. When the articles of accusation were carried to him, he refused to read them, and repeated that he submitted to the council which could not err because of its infallibility. To Sigismund, " his only hope after God," he wrote beseeching him " by the bowels of compassion of Jesus Christ " to influence the council to be merciful. The final blow fell on 29th May, when the formal decree of deposition was passed. It recited how " Our Lord Pope John " had by flight threatened the unity of the Church; how as a notorious simoniac, a waster of the goods and rights of the Roman Church and other Churches, as an evil administrator and as a man of evil life and manners he had caused " notorious scandal to the Church of God and Christian people ". Therefore he was deposed as " unworthy, useless, and harmful " and all Christians were forbidden to recognize him as Pope. It ought to be observed that in the deposition there was no charge of heresy.

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[1] Loserth, 469.

[2] Hardt, iv, 171–2, 179, 193, 196, 214.

[3] Hardt, iv, 196–208; Mansi, xxviii, 662–73, 715; Usk, 306; Hefele, vii, 125.

[4] Loserth, 469.

The council had won its first great victory in its fight for unity. A solemn procession of the whole council round the city celebrated the triumph. John upon receiving the news of his deposition lost all his nerve and expressed his regret that he had ever been elected Pope. In anger he threw the Papal cross out of the window. Sigismund had him sent as a guarded prisoner first to Heidelberg and then to Mannheim, where he remained until the council adjourned, and then bought his liberty for 38,500 ducats. He submitted to Martin V and in 1419 was made the dean of the college of cardinals, but died six months later and lies buried to-day in the Baptistery of Florence in a tomb built for him by Cosmo de Medici.

95. *Resignation of Gregory XII: Deposition of Benedict XIII*

The next problem in the work of unification was to dispose of the two remaining pretenders. Gregory XII, on 4th July, 1415, true at last to his promise, formally resigned through his cardinals at Constance, and ten days later Gregory himself confirmed the action. His two cardinals then took their seats in the council. Gregory was made cardinal of Porto and Legate of Ancona, and died in 1417 at the ripe age of 90 in an " odour of sanctity ".[1] The reunion of the obediences of John and Gregory was forthwith proclaimed by the council.[2]

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[1] Hardt, iv, 256.

The remaining schismatic Pope, Benedict XIII, stubbornly refused to abdicate.[3] It was clearly seen that there could be no general peace until he was disposed of, consequently, at its sixteenth session, 11th July, 1415, the council sent Sigismund and a committee of doctors to meet Benedict personally, as he had suggested, in order to persuade him to abdicate. Accompanied by 4,000 mounted guards, this deputation arrived at Narbonne on 15th August, where a stay of a month was made, and then on 18th September it entered Perpignan to meet Ferdinand of Aragon. Benedict grumbled about a safe-conduct, demanded that Sigismund treat him as Pope, and finally towards the end of September was persuaded to appear. He asserted that the way of justice seemed better to him than the way of abdication, still he was ready to resign providing: the decrees of Pisa were revoked, Constance dissolved, and a new council called in some free place like southern France or Aragon. As the only cardinal appointed before the Schism, he maintained that he alone had the right to elect a new Pope, but he was willing to let a committee of his cardinals and of the council's cardinals choose a Pope, after which he would resign. Pressure and threats were useless to break down the old Pontiff's stubbornness. In the deadlock which ensued, Benedict retired, on 14th November, to the rock fortress of Pensacola. At length on 13th December the representatives of Benedict and of the council formed twelve articles to settle the controversy. It was agreed that the Council of Constance should summon the princes and prelates adhering to Benedict to meet in a general council at Constance within three months; and that a similar summons was to be sent by the obedience of Benedict to the Council of Constance. The council thus formed should depose Benedict, elect a new Pope, reform the Church, and crush heresy. Benedict's acts up to November were to be ratified, his cardinals recognized by the council, and a safe-conduct given to himself in case he chose to appear. The following month Aragon, Castile, and Scotland withdrew their obedience from Benedict.

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[1] Hardt, iv, 192, 346, 380; Mansi, 733.

[2] Phillips, *Kirchenrecht*, i, 256.

[3] Stuhr, 70–1.

The final act in this drama did not come until the thirty-seventh session in 1417. Sigismund returned to Constance towards the end of January of that year. After representatives of Aragon reached Constance on 15th October, 1516, to constitute the fifth nation,[1] commissioners [2] were appointed on 5th November, 1416, to conduct the trial of Benedict XIII for breaking his promises and oaths, and for blocking the efforts for union. A citation was sent to Peter de Luna 28th November, ordering him to appear at Constance within seventy days after receiving the summons. Two Benedictine monks were sent to deliver the notice and reached the aged Pontiff 22nd January, 1417, who scowled at the black monks and exclaimed: "Here come the crows of the council." "Yes," they replied, "crows gather around a dead body." Benedict listened to the citation, but exclaimed from time to time, "That is false"; "They lie," haughtily asserted his right to the Papal chair, and repeated his earlier proposals. The report of the Commission reached the council on 10th March and on 1st April the council declared him guilty of contumacy. Commissioners were appointed to hear witnesses against him on the charges preferred. Meanwhile ambassadors from Castile had reached Constance on 29th March, joined the curial party, and suggested that the preliminaries of a new Papal election should be settled.[3] On 26th July Benedict was once more cited to appear, was declared contumacious, and was pronounced "perjured, the cause of scandal to the Universal Church, a favourer of inveterate schism, a hinderer of Church union, a heretic who wandered from the faith" unworthy of all rank and dignity, deposed from the Papacy, and lopped off like a dry bough from the Catholic Church. The sentence was published throughout the city amidst great rejoicing with ringing bells and a general holiday.[4]

The indomitable Spanish pretender, deserted by all his princely supporters, defied the decree of deposition, and continued to rule as the sovereign of the whole Church from his lonely castle for nine years until he died in 1423.[1] His four cardinals after his death elected Clement VIII as Pope, but he resigned in five years and accepted a bishopric from Martin V.[2] The fourth cardinal, Jean Carrier, then elected himself Pope Benedict XIV and died in prison in 1433.

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[1] Fromme, *Die Spanische Nation und das Konzil von Konstant*, Münster, 1896.

[2] Hardt, iv, 295, 456, 584.

[3] Hardt, iv, 1329.

[4] There were 27 charges against him. Loserth, 471.

96. *Election of Martin V as Head of Unified Christendom*

Now that the three pretenders to the Papal throne were at last effectively disposed of, steps were taken to elect a true Pontiff for united Christendom. From each of the five nations six deputies were selected, making thirty in all, who united with the twenty-three cardinals in holding the conclave which began on 8th November, 1417, and lasted until 11th November, and was held in the Kaufhaus.[3] The Germans joined the Italians and persuaded the other nations to accede to the election of Cardinal Oddo Colonna, who took the name of Martin V, and thereafter presided over the council as the universally recognized head of the Church. The Great Western Schism was at an end. It remained to be seen to what extent the revolutionary spirit engendered by the era of separation had undermined the prerogatives of the Medieval Papacy. Since the members of the conclave voted individually it is a noteworthy fact that the election of Martin V was practically in the hands of the council, which was a radical departure from the constitutional method of electing a Pope.

Once more the Church had a head and the shameful Schism, the most terrible crisis the Roman Church had experienced in its long career, was at an end. The chronicles of the period reveal the unbounded rejoicings throughout Christendom over the restoration of unity. "Men could scarcely speak for joy," wrote one chronicler.[4] The new Pope, a man in the prime of his powers, belonged to one of the most prominent and most powerful Roman families. He was known and respected for his simplicity, moderation, purity, wisdom, and impartiality. He was on the best of terms with all factions in the council, and seemed to all to be the best possible choice to fill the extremely difficult position of head of distracted Christendom.

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[1] Cf. Valois, iv, 450–54.

[2] Ib., 455; Mansi, xxviii, 1117.

[3] Richental, 166, gives a full and vivid description of the election and coronation of Martin V.

[4] Hardt, iv, 1483.

CHAPTER XIV

THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE: II. EFFORTS TO CRUSH HERESY

97. *History of Heresy: Conditions in the Fourteenth Century*

AFTER the ending of the Schism, which had afflicted the Church of Western Europe for forty years, by the deposition of John XXIII and Benedict XIII, and the voluntary abdication of Gregory XII, and the election of the universally recognized Pope Martin V, two problems still confronted the Council of Constance, namely, the suppression of the various heretical movements in the Church, which had appeared during the progress of the Schism, and an adequate reformation of the whole Church " in head and members ".

Heresy paralleled the entire history of the Church from New Testament times[1] onward. The Church of the Middle Ages created machinery adequate to deal with all who contradicted her doctrine, or challenged her practice, or questioned her authority. The tribunal of the Inquisition, founded in 1232 by Gregory XI, and developed by his successors, was designed to ferret out and crush heretics all over Christendom.[2]

To the medieval mind heresy was the most abhorred crime —far worse than any form of murder, for murder was a crime against man alone, while heresy was a sin against God and man. Like a deadly plague, it was highly contagious and could be contracted by an entire community. Hence it was not so much a personal matter as a danger to others. The loss of a heretic's own soul did not matter so much, but he might drag the souls of a whole region down with him to perdition, so the Church, as the spiritual guardian of its members, felt duty-bound, both for self-protection and to safeguard its communicants, to search out and to punish severely all persons suspected of holding heretical ideas. The power and supremacy of the Church rested upon its unity and common belief. These persons, who were worse than mad dogs, would destroy both, hence such treason to God and sin against the Holy Ghost should suffer the penalty of death. An excellent analogy is found in the punishment of traitors and anarchists in the modern state. The man judged guilty of heresy was outlawed by the Church, the state and civilized society. Good Christians were forbidden to give heretics food, clothing, or shelter. Faith was not to be kept with them[1]; burial was refused them[2]; compassion for them was a sin[3]; all intercourse with them was punished[4]; and they were ordered to be turned over for despoliation and trial wherever found.[5]

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[1] See various references to heresy in the New Testament.

[2] Lea, *Hist. of the Inq.*, i, 305.

The Medieval Church boasted that it never shed man's blood, hence convicted heretics were turned over to the state for punishment. The civil law defined heresy and prescribed the penalties. The laws of Constantine,[6] Theodosius,[7] and Gratian,[8] outlined the treatment of heretics; and the Justinian Code amplified the decrees of Theodosius. The barbaric codes made heresy a crime against the state as well as the Church. Charles the Great and the Empire became the protectors of the Church against heretics, and Frederick II enacted laws describing heresy as a crime against the offender's own soul, against the Empire, against the Church, and against God; and confiscation of property, disfranchisement, outlawry and death by burning were the punishments employed.[9] The national states like France and England copied the imperial laws in enacting measures against heretics.[10] It must be borne in mind, of course, that the criminal law of the Middle Ages was frightfully cruel and that many crimes besides heresy were punished as severely. The Church as a rule tried the heretic, and, if convicted, passed him over to the state for punishment. The law operated at once without an additional secular trial.

In the early Middle Ages there was not much heresy simply because there were few thinkers and people blindly accepted what they were taught. To the medieval mind scepticism in the modern sense was unknown. Dogmatism was rampant, hence there was little or no toleration. Yet at times, strange to say, the Church was more tolerant than either the state or the people. In the later Middle Ages, however, with the general intellectual awakening which crept over Europe, there appeared a surprisingly large amount of frank and radical criticism of the fundamental doctrines, constitution, administration, practices, and officials of the Church. The period of the Babylonian Exile and Great Western Schism saw the rise of individual heretics all over Europe, and the appearance of powerful heretical movements like those led by Wiclif in England and Huss in Bohemia. Dangerous discussions were heard on all sides and among all classes of society. Nearly all the evils in the Church: the corruptions of the clergy high and low,[1] simony,[2] and immorality,[3] were attributed to heresy.

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[1] Lea, i, 174, 228; ii, 468.

[2] Ib., i, 232.

[3] Ib., i, 240.

[4] Ib., ii, 31.

[5] Ib., i, 322.

[6] Ib., i, 212.

[7] Ib., i, 150, 164, 170, 172, 192.

[8] Ib., i, 224.

[9] Ib., i, 320.

[10] Ib., i, 323, 221, 235, 503.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the numerous pamphlets were replete with coarse and flippant wit at the expense of the Pope, clergy, and Church; but everybody laughed and enjoyed the keen thrusts. Mere criticism, however severe, and the demands for the correction of abuses, did not constitute heresy. Indeed, one might say that the Church criticized itself. It was only when men made an attack on the fundamental doctrine and authority of the Church, or repudiated them, that the question of heresy arose. Gerson, D'Ailly, and leading ecclesiastics and laymen of their calibre, were simply critics and reformers; Marsiglio of Padua, Wiclif, and Huss on the contrary, were genuine heretics and revolutionists. It is always necessary, therefore, to distinguish clearly between the genuine reformatory writers and the outspoken heretics of the Middle Ages. Both phases were not infrequently seen in the same man, as for instance, Wiclif, who was at first a constructive reformer, and later became a destructive opponent of the Church. In the United States and other countries the governmental officials and their policies are frequently and often bitterly attacked, but no one would interpret these assaults as a repudiation of our form of government, and, consequently, treason. So it was in the Medieval Church—to denounce a Pope as bad, to assail a bishop as unqualified for his office, to demand the correction of financial abuses, to question the wisdom of certain administrative policies, and to point out flagrant evils were not considered heretical. All thinking and observing men recognized the sore spots in the Church at least two centuries before Luther was born and many of them laboured valiantly to eliminate them in a manner that was good-natured and clearly understood. Moreover their criticisms were written in Latin, and hence read only by the cultured few; clergy and scholars, while in the absence of the printing press and with the widespread illiteracy the masses were shut out, save as the ideas were slowly disseminated among the people by oral repetition.

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[1] Lea, i, 61, 85, ; ii, 493, 531.

[2] Ib., iii, 625.

[3] Ib., i, 85, 101 ; ii, 335, 357, 408, 471 ; iii, 97, 127, 169.

98. *The Bohemian Question; Huss at Constance before arrival of Sigismund on 25th December*

Sigismund's eagerness and determination to call the Council of Constance were due in no small degree to a motive of self-interest. He wished to see Western Christendom united, so that he could crush the Hussite movement in Bohemia, to which he was heir, since his brother Wenzel was childless, because the religious uprising there had a very dangerous political aspect. Hence he arranged with Huss to appear before the Council of Constance, offered his safe-conduct, and promised to secure a hearing for him.[1] John XXIII was also very anxious to give the greatest prominence to the Bohemian dispute, because under the cover of this discussion he hoped to unify the Church under his leadership, to control the council, and to postpone the insistent demands for reformation. Huss himself, under the ban of excommunication, against all the warnings and pleadings of his friends, seemed eager to appear before the council as a matter of profound religious duty. In a defiant mood he had appealed from the Pope's authority to that of a general council, and declared that if the council refused him justice he would appeal to God.

In his anxiety to reach the council in good time, he left Bohemia on 11th October, 1414, without waiting for the safe conduct promised by Sigismund and which reached him on 5th November, only after he reached Constance. After all the safe-conduct was little more than a traveller's passport.[2] He posted handbills in Prague announcing his decision to appear before the council and wrote to King Wenzel of his intention and saying that he was willing to suffer death if condemned.[3] He wrote letters to intimate friends, and made his will before his departure from Prague, accompanied by his servants and three Bohemian noblemen: Wenzel of Duba, John of Chlum, and Henry of Latzenborck, who served as a guard of safety *en route* and during his stay in Constance.[1] Apparently Huss hoped to win the fathers of the council to accept Wiclif's fundamental ideas, for he took his sermons along with him, and before starting he had witnesses testify to his orthodoxy.[2] With a council composed largely of ardent reformers, all expecting much from it, Huss felt that he would receive sympathetic treatment.

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[1] Palacky, *Documenta*, 114, 70.

[2] Loserth, 471.

[3] Workman, 140 sqq.

Huss travelled *via* Nuremberg and was well received by the people and clergy along the way. He posted notices on the church doors of the various towns through which he journeyed announcing that he was on his way to Constance to defend his faith and inviting all who wished to attack him to meet him there.[3] On 3rd November he reached Constance, was greeted by a large and curious crowd, and took lodgings in a baker's house known as the White Pigeon, still shown to tourists. The following day John XXIII received him courteously, allowed him to go freely about the city, but forbade him to attend high mass or to preach. However, he celebrated mass daily in his own rooms, with many persons present, even though under sentence of excommunication. To his friends at home he wrote that the Germans had received him in a friendly manner.[4] But he was soon to see that his greatest enemies were among these very German country people. Indeed, shortly after his arrival at Constance, notice was posted on the church doors that Michael von Deutschbrod would meet any defender of the heretic Huss.[5] The cardinals seemed to have been incensed that an excommunicated heretic should be given so much freedom.

Meanwhile the various elements hostile to Huss, who stood out in strong relief in the minds of the orthodox as the most conspicuous example of the widespread heresy in the Church, began to form a party determined to make an example of him. Chief among his opponents were the Bishop of Leitomysl; Michael of Deutschbrod, a former priest of Prague, whom the Pope had appointed *procurator de causis fidei*; Wenzel Tiem, whose sale of indulgences had been hindered by the Hussite reformation; and Stephen Palecz, of the University of Prague, formerly a friend of Huss, who had turned against his former leader and bitterly assailed him. This group of Bohemians was determined to have Huss punished. The English, who had condemned Wiclif, of course had no good word for his pupil. The French reformers denounced the Bohemian heretical movement, and as early as May, 1414, Gerson wrote to the Archbishop of Prague, urging him to root out the errors of Wiclif, and on 24th September he sent him twenty articles taken from the writings of Huss, which the theological faculty of the University of Paris had condemned as erroneous. Gerson regarded Huss as a dangerous revolutionist, who sought to overthrow all sanctions for both the State and the Church.[1] The Pope and the cardinals had already declared themselves against Huss, and the Italians were disposed to side in with their leader. With this formidable opposition Huss' case was prejudged, and it is difficult to understand where Huss expected to find partisans in the council.

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[1] Loserth, 471. Mladenowitz accompanied John of Chlum, preserved Huss' letters and afterwards edited them with notes.

[2] Loserth, 471.

[3] Lea, *Hist. of Inq.*, ii, 457.

[4] Loserth, 471.

[5] Ib.

The foes of Huss were anxious to proceed against him without waiting for the coming of Sigismund. Indeed John XXIII encouraged this sentiment, because under the cover of a discussion of faith and heresy, he hoped to strengthen his own position and to postpone the consideration of reforms. He readily agreed, therefore, that Huss should first be summoned to appear before him and the cardinals, and on 28th November the Bishops of Trent and Augsburg, accompanied by the burgomaster of Constance, went to the house of Huss to order him to present himself.

John of Chlum, who was dining with Huss when the delegation arrived, angrily said that Huss had come to speak to the council at Sigismund's request and that the Emperor did not wish him to appear before his arrival. The Bishop of Trent answered that they had come on a mission of peace, whereupon Huss arose from the table remarking that he had come to Constance to address the council and not to confer with the cardinals, but nevertheless he was willing to go anywhere to answer for the truth. Consequently he mounted his horse and at twelve o'clock presented himself to the cardinals at the Pope's palace. He was informed that many serious charges had been made against him of teaching errors in Bohemia. He answered: "Most Reverend Fathers, know that I would rather die than hold a single error. I came to this council of my own accord, and if it be proved that I have erred in anything I am willing humbly to be corrected and amend." The cardinals replied that his words were reasonable and then adjourned, leaving Huss under a guard of soldiers.

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[1] Palacky, *Documenta*, 528.

The cardinals reconvened at four o'clock the same day to consider Huss' case. The articles prepared by Michael, the procurator *de causis fidei*, laid the following accusations against Huss before them: (1) That he denied transubstantiation and taught the necessity of receiving the Eucharist in both kinds; (2) that he based the validity of the sacraments upon the moral character of the priest; (3) and that he taught heresy concerning the nature of the Church, its possessions, its discipline and its organization.[1] The enemies of Huss urged that he be imprisoned on the ground that he might escape; so Huss was sent under guard to the house of one of the canons of Constance for eight days, and then on 6th December taken to the Dominican monastery on a small island close to the shore where he was cast into a dark, foul dungeon close to the mouth of a sewer. There he contracted a fever which threatened his life and John's own physician was sent to attend him.

This act was an outright violation of the imperial safe-conduct. The fiery John of Chlum, upon hearing of the intention to imprison Huss, forced his way into the Pope's presence and protested: "Holy Father, this is not what you promised. I told you that Master Huss came here under the safe-conduct of my master, the King of the Romans; and you answered that if he had killed your brother he would be safe. I wish to raise my voice and warn those who have violated my master's safe-conduct." John denied having given the order and laid the blame on the cardinals.[2] John of Chlum stormed around Constance showing the safe-conduct of Sigismund to everybody and denouncing the perfidy of the Pope and the cardinals. Sigismund, to whom the matter was early reported, expressed anger at the violation of his promise, sent orders to have Huss released from prison, and threatened to go to Constance and break down the prison doors. But in Sigismund's absence the enemies of Huss were all powerful and Huss remained in prison.

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[1] Palacky, *Documenta*, 199.

[2] Hardt, iv, 11–12, 22.

When Sigismund arrived on 25th December, he blustered about and angrily denounced the treatment of Huss. Unless Huss were freed from prison, he threatened to leave Constance, and indeed made a showing of doing so, and declared that he would withdraw his imperial protection from the council. The cardinals remained firm, however, and plainly told Sigismund that unless he yielded they themselves would break up the council and throw the blame for its dissolution on him. Too much was at issue to run such a risk, so Sigismund swallowed his pride, and permitted his course to be guided by self-interest. Huss was sacrificed to the necessities of the situation. Upon the formal request of the council, Sigismund issued a decree on 1st January, 1415, declaring the council free in all matters of faith and competent to proceed against all heretics. At the same time he pledged himself to counteract the numerous threats made to defend Huss at all hazards.

The conduct of Sigismund seems to us revolting and inexcusable to-day, but it must be remembered that we are considering fifteenth and not twentieth century justice. Individual liberty had no consideration in the trial of a heretic. D'Ailly called on Sigismund and argued that Huss' heresy unapproved was error countenanced, and that it ought not to be permitted to impede the reformation or the unity of the Church.[1] All good Churchmen prayed that his majesty might not give way to the lies and subtleties of the Wiclifites. Doctors and clergy begged the Emperor to think of the larger good of the whole Church. Ferdinand of Aragon wrote to him: "It is impossible to break faith with one who has broken faith with God," and said that Huss should be killed without even a trial. The general belief of the period was that righteous conduct depended upon righteousness of religious opinion, and persecution was the logical expression of that idea. "The council could not have done otherwise than it did without surrendering those principles."[2] Thus Huss was presumed to be guilty and had little chance to prove his innocence. As an excommunicated heretic his fate was already decided upon. His death was regarded as necessary for the unity and purity of the Church.[1] Hence Sigismund's perfidy was not an act of religious hate or even fanaticism, but due to the religious concepts of the age.[2] The letter of safe-conduct was formally revoked on 8th April, 1415.[3]

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[1] Finke, 253.

[2] Lea, *Hist. of Inq.*, ii, 467.

99. *Commissions for the "Extirpation of Heresy"*

Huss was arrested on 28th November, 1414, and imprisoned while his enemies presented formal articles of accusation against him. On 1st December a commission of ten [4] was appointed to (1) conduct the trial of Huss; (2) to receive charges against him; (3) to examine witnesses; and (4) to negotiate with him.[5] The leading cardinals were members and were named in a bull of John on 3rd December. John, Patriarch of Constantinople, was chairman of the commission, and other prominent members were the Bishop of Lübeck and Bernard, Bishop of Castelli.[6] Theologians were called in to advise the commission in conducting the trial. In addition to the accusations presented against Huss by Michael of Deutschbrod, it seems that the procurators and promoters of the council made additional charges including blame for the outbreaks in Prague, his excommunication, and the promulgation of Wiclif's teachings.[7] Since many of the witnesses were his personal foes, Huss asked for an advocate, but the request was refused on the ground that it was contrary to law for anyone to defend a suspected heretic. The proceedings were rushed along and promised a speedy termination of the case. As soon as Huss recovered from his illness a series of forty-two errors taken from his writings by Palecz was submitted to him, to which he replied *seriatim* in writing, pointing out the false constructions, giving explanations, defending some charges and conditioning others. A sub-committee with D'Ailly at its head visited Huss, plied him with questions, and examined his writings to discover additional charges of heresy. But the flight of John on 20th March overshadowed the trial of Huss for a while and led to the dissolution of the commission. Fear that Huss might also escape led to his transfer

[1] Mansi, xxviii, 791, 799; Mirbt, 156.

[2] Lea, ii, 462.

[3] Raynaldus, 1414, No. 10.

[4] Hardt, iv, 385; Tschackert, 185.

[5] Palacky, 199–200, 204, 252, 542; Stuhr, 72.

[6] Baronius (Theiner), xxvii, 367.

[7] Palacky, 194–204, 252, 506.

to the castle of the Bishop of Constance at Gottlieben, where he remained until 6th June, poorly nourished, suffering much from illness, his feet chained in the daytime and his hands chained to the wall at night. The privilege of writing letters was denied him. By a strange fate the run-away Pope was for a short time a fellow prisoner with the heretic.

On 6th April a new commission of four members was appointed to continue the trial of Huss and at the same time to consider the heresy of Wiclif.[1] D'Ailly was named chairman and Cardinal Filastre was a member. The commission was authorized to consult the doctors of canon law on questions of theology. But since D'Ailly was no jurist he refused to conduct the trial, so on 17th April a third commission was named, consisting of one prelate from each of the four nations, with full power to act on the report which D'Ailly's commission had formulated.[2]

The commission first considered the case of Wiclif's heresy and on 4th May condemned the dead English heretic as the chief of heretics, together with forty-five heretical articles drawn from his works and 260 errors already stigmatized by the University of Oxford. His writings were ordered to be burned, his memory declared infamous, and his remains were ordered to be exhumed and cast out of holy ground. This action was a sinister foreboding of the fate of Huss, and no doubt was intended to be a prelude to the sentence against him.

From 5th to 8th June the first public hearings were held with Huss in the refectory of the Franciscan monastery, where Huss was confined during the last weeks of his life, in the presence of cardinals, archbishops, bishops, doctors, and the rabble. D'Ailly was present, and took a leading part. Everything was done to force him to submit to the judgment of the council, but the case was hopeless. Each side stood on a different set of principles and was guided by divergent philosophical premises. Extracts from his works were read and witnesses were heard. He was accused of denying transubstantiation, of saying that Wiclif was a good Christian, of declaring that salvation did not depend upon the Pope, of asserting that no one could be excommunicated save by

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[1] Hardt, iv, 100.

[2] Ib., 104, 118; Mansi, xxvii, 610; Stuhr, 73.

God alone, and of expressing the wish that his soul might be where Wiclif's was.[1] He was not allowed to defend himself, but was howled down whenever he tried to explain with the command, "Only yes or no." When his book *On the Church* was shown, the crowd yelled "Burn it!" Driven into a corner by the keen thrusts of the theologians, Huss on 7th June explained that at least God and his conscience were still on his side. D'Ailly replied, "We cannot judge you by your conscience, but must rely upon the evidence. Even Gerson, the most renowned doctor of Christendom, is against you."[2] Sigismund was present, and urged Huss to submit. He acknowledged having told the commission that he would not defend an obstinate heretic, and boasted that, so long as a single heretic remained, he was ready to light the fire to burn him with his own hand. Huss said that he was not there to be stubborn, but to learn the truth if any one could prove to him his error. "I had expected to find more decency," he cried out, "more kindness and better manners in a general council."[3] The Emperor promised to give him a written list of the charges against him the next day.

Consequently, on 8th June, Huss was handed thirty-nine distinct accusations, twenty-six of which were drawn from his book *On the Church*, and the trial proceeded. The articles were read one by one and the proofs of their accuracy cited. To several of the articles Huss objected that they misrepresented his true meaning, so D'Ailly had them compared with the original passages. To the article that "a wicked priest was not a true pastor", Huss explained that he meant the priest's merit and not his office, and asked whether the deposed Pope John was a true Pope or a robber. The cardinals smiled in their confusion, and answered, "Oh, he is a true Pope." In another connection Huss asserted that kings in mortal sin have no right to authority, whereupon Sigismund said, "John Huss, no one lives without sin," and D'Ailly exclaimed that Huss by his dangerous teachings, sought to overthrow both the Church and the State. In vain did Huss try to show that each article, if rightly interpreted, had an orthodox meaning. It was entirely useless for him, like

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[1] Mansi, xxvii, 756.

[2] Palacky, 278; Tschackert, 225, 235; Schwab, 298, 586.

[3] Loserth, 472.

Luther at Worms, to promise to revoke any statement proved untrue by the Bible or by sound argument, or to beg the council for the love of God not to wrong his conscience, simply because his case had been prejudged. After all the articles had been read, and their attestation made, D'Ailly as president of the congregation, told him that, if he so desired, another opportunity would be given him to defend his opinions, but strongly advised him to submit to the judgment of the many learned men in the council. Cries from all sides of the room urged him to retract. Huss replied that he had gone to Constance, not obstinately to defend his views, but to seek better information, and begged another audience. The angry and impatient prelates shouted, " The council is here not to inform, but to judge." Huss defiantly answered that he could not lie and abjure doctrines he never held. Sigismund warned him that two courses were open to him—either to recant and throw himself on the council's mercy or suffer the consequences of the council's decision. Huss was taken back to prison. D'Ailly maintained that compromise was out of the question—Huss must abjure.[1] The Emperor agreed with that view, and said that if Huss refused to do so, then he must be burned.

The revolutionary party in the council was quite willing to make Huss the scapegoat to prove their own orthodoxy, but still the leaders of the party had no wish to see him put to death, since confession of the guilt of heresy and abjuration such as the law required would suffice for their purpose. The obstacle in the way of Huss' abjuration, however, lay not in the heresies he had taught, but in those which he had not taught. His judges had found him guilty of all, hence his denial of some was mere contumacy and only aggravated his guilt. Many prelates visited him in prison to persuade him to confess and recant. One doctor said to him, " if the council told me I had but one eye, I would confess it to be so, though I know I have two."[2] An Englishman explained to him how the English doctors had abjured the heresies of Wiclif when required to do so. But Huss would go no farther than to agree to swear that he had never held or taught the heresies charged against him and that he would never hold or teach them. When a formula of retraction was presented to him in these words, " though many things are laid to my charge which I have never thought, yet I submit myself concerning all such points either drawn from my books or from the deposition of witnesses, to the order, definition, and correction of the holy council," he replied that he could not condemn many truths which seemed to the council scandalous, and that he could not perjure himself by renouncing errors which he did not hold. "I stand," he concluded, "at the judgment-seat of Christ, to whom I have appealed, knowing that He will judge every man, not according to false or erroneous witness, but according to the truth and each one's deserts." Against the authority of the Universal Church represented in the council, Huss had the audacity and self-confidence to set up his own knowledge, his own judgment, and his own conscience; and when those were denied, he appealed to God. Hence all possibility of a compromise and understanding was at an end.

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[1] Hardt, iv, 16; Tschackert, 230.

[2] Workman, 226, 239–41.

On 15th June the council appointed a new commission of eighteen members for the "more speedy extirpation of heresy".[1] Four cardinals held seats on the commission and, among the general instructions given it, a two-thirds majority, later changed to one-half, was empowered to act. This commission dealt with the case of Jean Petit and Jerome of Prague, and on 23rd September, 1415, it was empowered to look after the whole heretical movement in Bohemia. Apparently the case of Huss still remained in the hands of the former commission of four appointed on 15th April.[2] On this same date the council, having learned that the Eucharist was being administered in both kinds in Bohemia, declared the practice to be heretical and contrary to the custom and law of the Church. Huss in letters to friends condemned the decree as mere madness, a condemnation of Christ's command, and wrote to Hawlik in Prague urging him not to withhold the cup from the laity.[3] On 24th June the council ordered all of Huss' books to be seized and burned. On 18th June he sent to his friends a copy of the articles proved against him, together with his own defence. Those drawn from his writings were not denied, although he said that many of them were garbled and falsified; but those alleged against him by witnesses he denounced as mostly lies. "It only remains," he concluded pathetically, "for me to abjure and revoke and undergo fearful penance, or to burn. May the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost grant me the spirit of wisdom and fortitude to persevere to the end and to escape the snares of Satan."[1] Among his last letters was one written to his alma mater, the University of Prague, asserting that he had not retracted a single article.

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[1] Hardt, i, 10, 561–2; iv, 528, 529, 616–31.
[2] Ib., iv, 335.
[3] Workman, 185, 245, 248.

On 1st July eight prelates led by the Archbishops of Riga and Ragusa endeavoured to show him that a request for recantation was not unreasonable, but he handed them a written confession calling God to witness that he had never taught many of the articles and, as for the rest, if erroneous he regretted it, but could not abjure them.[2] Another delegation, with D'Ailly, Zabarella, and Bishop Hallam of Salisbury visited him on 5th July, and offered to let him deny the heresies proved by witnesses, if he would abjure those found in his writings. But Huss was immovable and declared that he would rather be burned a thousand times than recant and thereby violate the confidence of those who believed in him.[3] As a last resource Sigismund sent his three friends John of Chlum, Wenzel of Duba, and Lacembok, with four bishops, to hold a final interview for the purpose of persuading him to recant. John of Chlum advised him to die rather than lie to God. One of the bishops asked him whether he presumed to be wiser than the whole council, and he replied: "Show me the least member of the council who will inform me better out of the Scriptures, and I will forthwith recant." "He is obstinate in his heresy," said the prelates, and the last effort to induce Huss to surrender was over. The endeavour of the revolutionary party in the council to save itself and Huss was in vain, and nothing but the final act of the tragedy remained. Sigismund greatly feared the political effect of Huss' return to Bohemia and said, "Then the fire would break out! It is much better to destroy the roots here in order to destroy the branches there. The terror will have a good effect."[4]

100. *The Death of Huss*

The next day, 6th July, saw the most gorgeous *auto da fé* in the history of Christendom. A general session of the council was held in the cathedral, which was crowded to the limit with the prelates and doctors in their splendid robes, and Sigismund, the nobles, and the officers of the Empire, with their insignia and emblems of secular authority. At six o'clock in the morning Huss, resigned to martyrdom after seven months of imprisonment, badgering, and deepening disappointment, was conducted to the doors of the cathedral, where he was kept standing outside until the celebration of mass was completed, and then he was admitted to the presence of the greatest council ever held in the history of the Church. He was placed on a high chair set in the centre of the Church, especially reserved for him.[1] The Bishop of Lodi preached a sermon from Romans iv, 6, "that the body of sin may be destroyed," in which he emphasized God's pleasure at the extermination of heretics, rang the changes on familiar phrases of the rotten piece of flesh, the spark kindling the great fire, and the creeping cancer; and declared that the more violent the poison, the swifter should be the use of the cauterizing iron. He assured Sigismund that the events of that day would confer on him immortal glory for saving the Church from schism and heresy. During the progress of the discourse Huss knelt in silent prayer.

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[1] Palacky, 309, 225–34; Hardt, iv, 329.

[2] Workman, 276.

[3] Mansi, xxvii, 764.

[4] Loserth, 473.

The commission appointed to pronounce sentence on Huss then mounted the pulpit. First was read an order forbidding all manifestation of feeling by hand, foot, or mouth on penalty of excommunication. Next thirty articles were read against Huss and pronounced heretical and odious to pious ears. Huss' name was repeatedly coupled with that of Wiclif.[2] The first article charged Huss with erroneous teaching about the character of the Church, and the last one with holding that neither lord nor prelate, in mortal sin, could exercise authority. The number and rank, but not the names of the witnesses on each article, together with a digest of the testimony were also given. Huss begged the right to answer the charges, but was commanded to keep silent, and then knelt down in prayer. The ridiculous assertion that he had declared himself the fourth person of the Trinity aroused him to remonstrance; and when he was accused of despising the Papal excommunication and refusing to obey the Pope's summons, in vain he sought to explain his position. His writings were condemned as heretical and ordered to be burned. The sentence against him ran as follows: "The Holy Council, having God alone before its eyes, condemns John Huss to have been and to be a true, real, and open heretic, the disciple not of Christ but of John Wiclif, one who in the University of Prague and before the clergy and people, declared Wiclif to be a Catholic and an evangelical doctor." He was ordered to be degraded from the priesthood and turned over to the secular authority for punishment. The sentence was carried by a unanimous vote. Sigismund blushed scarlet when Huss reminded him of his safe-conduct and prayed aloud to God to have mercy on his enemies.[1]

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[1] Mansi, xxvii, 474.

[2] Hardt, iv, 408; Mansi, xxvii, 754, 1209.

The ceremony of degradation from his sacerdotal rank then took place. He was first dressed in priestly robes and a chalice put in his hands. Once more he was exhorted to retract, but he cried out that he would not violate his conscience or lie to God. The Archbishop of Milan with six bishops proceeded to remove each article of his priestly office with solemn formality, to scrape his fingers, and to destroy his tonsure. On his head was placed a paper cap three feet high, decorated with painted devils and the word "heresiarch". "We commit your soul to the devil," cried the prelates, while Huss quickly replied, "And I commit myself to the most gracious Lord Jesus."

The trial of the Church was ended. No secular trial was necessary, because the law operated at once. "Take him and punish him as a heretic," said Sigismund to the Count Palatine, Ludwig, who turned him over to the imperial *Vogt* of Constance, who led him forth to be burned. Accompanied by a guard of 1,000 armed men and a throng of people, including nobles, prelates, and cardinals, Huss was led through the city at midday past the episcopal palace, on the steps of which he saw his books being burned at which mockery he smiled, out to a meadow near the river. He walked with a firm step, singing and praying, but at sight of the stake he knelt down and prayed. His hands were tied behind him and he was chained to the stake by his neck. Straw and wood were piled around him to his chin and rosin sprinkled over the combustible material. For the last time his life was offered him if he would abjure, but he replied that the charges against him were false and he was willing to die for the truth. To a priest who offered to administer the sacrament in case he recanted he answered, "It is not necessary: I am not in mortal sin." After thanking his jailors for their brotherly kindness, he began to address the crowd in German, but he was cut short. The fire was lighted and his shoes and clothing were cast into it. The reformer gave up his life singing "Christ, thou Son of the living God, pity, pity thou me." The ashes were scraped up and thrown into the river, and the earth about the stake dug up and carted off to prevent his admirers carrying them away as relics. Thus ended the most momentous and significant event of the century. The next day solemn thanks were returned to God, in a holy procession led by Sigismund and his queen, nineteen cardinals, two patriarchs, seventy-seven bishops, the clergy of the council, and many nobles and princes. A few days later Sigismund departed for Spain with a spot on his fickle soul. The council meanwhile remained in session, as if this were an ordinary affair, and three weeks later declared that it had done nothing more pleasing to God than to punish the obstinate Bohemian heretical martyr. The leading theologians all approved of the act. D'Ailly himself would have had to surrender the purple if he had defended Huss, but Gerson later declared that had Huss been given an advocate he could not have been convicted of error.[1]

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[1] Ficker, in Mittheil. d. Inst. f. oest Gesch. (1889), 177; Havet, *L'hérésie et le bras séculier au moyen âge jusqu'au XIIIe siècle*, Paris, 1881; Gosselin, *Temporal Power of the Pope in the Middle Ages*, i, 85–9.

The trial of Huss for that day was unprecedentedly fair.[2] It was conducted in accordance with the universally received practice in such cases, and such exceptions as were made were all in favour of the accused. He was not tortured as was commonly done. He was allowed to appear before the council —an unheard-of consideration. He was given opportunities repeatedly to acknowledge his guilt and to recant. Heresy laws were meant to be executed just like our laws against any crime. The inevitable result was the fault of the system and not of the judges, whose consciences were undoubtedly clear.[3] Of course from Huss' standpoint and from ours the trial was unfair. But are not all trials for opinion considered unjust by the accused? A man on trial for treason to-day may urge that his conduct is the highest form of patriotism, but human justice will not accept his plea. For centuries the Church had taught that the one crime for which there could be no excuse and no pardon, without abjuration, was obstinate heresy. Huss was certainly persistent and consistent in his refusal to retract, or even compromise, and indeed even seemed to welcome martyrdom for the truth in his soul. He was a martyr to Wiclifism.[1] His greatest offence was the denial of the infallibility of the Papacy, and his appeal to the Scriptures and the conscience as the source of final authority, which undermined the very foundations of the Roman hierarchy. All of the thirty articles except No. 25 have as their content these charges, involving a revolt against the divinely instituted visible Church.

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[1] Tschackert, 275, 388.
[2] Mansi, xxvii, 799; Mirbt, no. 319 (3rd ed.).
[3] Hardt, i, 306.

Huss accomplished much more by martyrdom than he could have possibly done by living. He directed the attention of all Europe to his ideas and became a true forerunner of the Reformation a century later. His death aroused the Bohemian heretical movement to a bitter and determined opposition to both the Papacy and the Empire, which disturbed Europe for several generations. The significance of the tragedy for the age ahead is admirably illustrated in three medallions on a cantionale of 1572 preserved in the library of Prague. On the first Wiclif is shown striking sparks from a stone; on the second Huss is kindling a fire from the sparks; and on the third Luther lighting a torch from the flame holds it up to enlighten the world.[2] Luther was not directly and consciously influenced by Wiclif, but indirectly and unconsciously he was powerfully affected by the movement the English reformer set going. Nor at the outset of his career was Luther affected by Huss, although he knew of the Hussite movement, of course, and at Erfurt University he had read a volume of his sermons and was amazed that a priest who preached such evangelical sermons should be burned at the stake. He quickly put the volume down for fear of its heretical contagion.[3] In his theological education he must have had Huss' errors repeatedly denounced by his teachers, while his acquaintance with the various reform ideas afloat in the Church must have familiarized him with Huss' ideas without knowing their source. At the debate in Leipzig, Eck forced Luther to acknowledge that he was a Hussite; and in an edition of Huss' letters in 1537 he defended the martyr and wrote that if he was a heretic "then no person under the sun can be looked upon as a true Christian". There can be no doubt that Huss set in motion reformatory ideas in Germany, which helped to create a powerful reform party of which Luther became the acknowledged and successful leader.

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[1] Loserth, xvi: Buddenseig, *Huss, Patriot and Reformer*, 11.

[2] Schaff, v, pt. ii, p. 387.

[3] Köstlin, i, 53, 87.

103. *The Trial and Death of Jerome of Prague*

Jerome of Prague was the second Bohemian heretic tried by the Council of Constance, condemned, and burned at the stake on 30th May, 1416. A Bohemian nobleman, born in Prague, he bridged the social gap between the Bohemian aristocracy and Huss, and posed as the knight-errant of the Hussite movement. He entered the University of Prague at an early age, where he probably imbibed his first ideas of the reform movement, and then in 1398 proceeded to Oxford, where he was greatly impressed by the writings of Wiclif, of whose *Dialogus* and *Triàlogus* he made copies and carried them back to Prague in 1402. The next year it is stated that he set out for a journey to Jerusalem. In 1404 he was in attendance at the University of Paris, where he took his master's degree, and, as a public champion of Wiclif's ideas came into conflict with Gerson, the chancellor. He continued his studies in the Universities of Cologne and Heidelberg in 1406, and the next year returned to Prague, where he attracted attention at once by his advanced and outspoken opinions. He gave offence by exhibiting a portrait of Wiclif in his room, was on very intimate terms of friendship with Huss, and took part in all the controversies of the day in the University. He was a champion of the Bohemian party in the University against the Germans, and had much to do with the secession of the latter to Leipzig. By 1410 his speeches in favour of Wiclif had incurred the ill-will of the Archbishop of Prague, so he went to Hungary, before whose king he was permitted to preach, although he was only a layman, denouncing the rapacity and immorality of the clergy. Appearing next at Vienna, the ecclesiastical authorities censured him for spreading Wiclif's doctrines, and he secretly fled to Moravia, and thence to Prague. In 1412 with Huss he made an attack on the sale of indulgences in Bohemia and was very popular with the students and laity on account of his fiery eloquence. Shortly afterwards he proceeded to Poland at the monarch's invitation, and made a deep impression but was strongly opposed by the Roman clergy. In Lithuania he took part in the Greek Church services, and indeed it was said that he dreamed of union between the Bohemian Church and the Greek Church.

He was still among the northern Slavs when he learned that Huss had been summoned to appear before the Council of Constance, and immediately wrote to his friend urging him to obey the summons and promising to proceed thither to give him assistance. Huss warned him not to join him at Constance, but nevertheless he secretly arrived at Constance on 4th April, 1415. On his way he posted on church doors a request for a safe conduct in order to answer for his opinions at the council. He soon felt the dangerous atmosphere of Constance, and was persuaded by his friends to flee to Bohemia. He escaped the officials on 9th April, and started for Prague, but was seized on 24th April at Hirschau only 25 miles from the Bohemian border, and taken back in chains, arriving at Constance 24th May. Meanwhile, on 18th April, the council had issued a formal summons to him to appear within fifteen days to answer for his heresy, and not appearing within the date set, on 2nd May, he was pronounced contumacious. Judges were appointed to examine him, and his old adversary, Gerson, loudly berated him for his dangerous heresies, and the crowd shouted " Burn him ! Burn him ! " He was taken to a dungeon in the cemetery of St Paul, where he was chained hand and foot to a bench too high for him to sit on, and fed on bread and water until his friends succeeded in securing better treatment. He fell dangerously ill, asked for a confessor, but never left his prison except for audience and execution.

His trial proceeded according to the regular inquisitorial process. Stephen Palecz and Michael of Deutschbrod were ready with their charges, and a mass of testimony was soon collected. Hearings were given on 23rd May and 19th July, and the commissioners found Jerome a much more learned and skilful opponent than Huss. His nervous temperament, however, unfitted him to bear the protracted agony with the patience of Huss. His courage failed him in his foul prison, and to regain his freedom he renounced the teachings of Wiclif and Huss. In the only letter we have from his pen on 12th August, he declared that Huss had been justly executed. He requested to be heard at a general meeting of the council, and since the council was very anxious for his retraction, the request was granted. On 11th September he was brought before the council, where a long and elaborate recantation was read. Of his own free will he condemned the thirty articles against Huss as, some heretical, others erroneous, and still others scandalous. In like manner he condemned the forty-five articles against Wiclif. He submitted himself wholly to the will of the council, gave his assent to all its acts, and asked for a fitting penance for his aberrations. To leave no doubt of his abjuration, on 23rd September, at the next general session, he was placed in the pulpit, where he repeated his recantation and by solemn oath invoked an eternal anathema on all who wandered from the faith and on himself in particular if he should do so.

He had been led to believe that in case of retraction he would be free to retire to some Swabian monastery, and had the council been wise, it would have carried out that promise. Instead the council, in accordance with canon law which prescribed harsh imprisonment for converted heretics, sent him back to his dungeon, and commanded him to write to Bohemia announcing his apostacy. The result of this treatment was that remorse and self-accusation took possession of his mind, and rumours of the change began to float about in the council. Hence on 29th October, Gerson called the attention of the council to the unsatisfactory character of Jerome's revocation, and, since some new charges against him had been carried to Constance by a few Carmelite monks from Prague, it was suggested that he be required to answer them. To the credit of cardinals Zabarella, D'Ailly, Orsini, and Antonio be it said that they argued for the liberation of Jerome, but their voices were drowned in charges of receiving bribes. Consequently, on 24th February, 1416, a new commission was appointed to conduct a new examination covering the whole ground. The commissioners made their report on 27th April, and the prosecutor of heresy submitted a long indictment enumerating all his offences.

The accusations ranged from carrying Wiclif's books to Huss, abetting the Bohemian heretical movement, and preaching heresy all over Europe to such trivial incidents as slapping a monk in the face.

Jerome had meanwhile regained his balance of mind and his audacity. He now denied that he was a heretic, complained of unjust treatment in prison, and even claimed indemnification for expenses and damages. His dialectical dexterity and subtlety nonplussed his prosecutors, who fell back upon the principle that the denial of his heretical ideas was positive proof of his guilt.[1] On 9th May, the commission made another report of the whole case from beginning to end. Jerome finally promised to answer categorically all questions before the council, and the hearing was set for 23rd May in the cathedral. He refused to take the oath unless allowed to speak freely. As the articles were read he answered "yes" or "no" making a distinction here and there, and sending hot shot at those who continually interrupted him. The day passed and 26th May was appointed for the completion of the hearing. At the conclusion of the reading of the articles, the chief of the commissioners, John Patriarch of Constantinople, summed up the results by saying that Jerome was convicted of fourfold heresy, but since he had repeatedly asked to be heard, the opportunity to speak would be given to him, although he was warned that this was his last chance to confess, repent and throw himself on the mercy of the council.[2]

Poggio, the apostolic secretary, wrote: "He stood fearless, undaunted, not merely despising death, but longing for it like another Cato."[3] His eloquence and sincerity, as he reviewed his whole life, won the admiration of many in the council. In a moment of weakness of the flesh, he said that he had recanted, met all the demands of the council, and had condemned his friend John Huss, but now he declared that Huss was a just and holy man, to whom he would cleave to the last. No sin ever weighed so heavily on his conscience as his cowardly betrayal of Huss and the truth, hence he solemnly revoked his abjuration. Wiclif had written with a profounder truth than any man before him, and dread of the stake alone had led him to condemn such a master. Then in ringing words that must have made the ears of the prelates tingle, he denounced the vices of the clergy, and especially the Roman curia, which had driven Wiclif and Huss to labour for reform. Although many in the council knew the truth of his charges, at the same time they realized that as a self-confessed lapsed heretic under the law he was entitled to no further consideration, and yet they proposed, with unheard of mercy, to give him four more days to reconsider and repent, and set 30th May for his definite sentence.

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[1] Hardt, iii, 39; iv, 634.

[2] Ib., iii, 64.

[3] Ib., iv, 754–62; Whitcomb, *Lit. Source Book of the It. Ren.*, 40–7, gives Jerome's defence. See Schaff., v, pt. ii, 390.

On the day appointed the council assembled early. Again the Bishop of Lodi was called upon to preach a sermon. His victory over Huss caused him to exceed his former effort in a hard cruel address. "You were not tortured," he roared, "but I wish you had been, for it would have forced you to vomit forth all your errors; such treatment would have opened your eyes, which guilt has closed." The nobles present were called upon to note how the base-born Huss and Jerome had filled the fine kingdom of Bohemia with trouble and rebellion. Hence he urged the council to punish him with the fate due to every heretic. Jerome replied in a few eloquent, dignified sentences deploring his betrayal of Wiclif and Huss, and asserting his own conscientiousness. His abjuration was read to him. He acknowledged it, and said that it had been extracted by a dread of the fire. A long sentence was read condemning him as a relapsed heretic, and an anathematized excommunicate and "as a rotten and withered branch". The council unanimously shouted "*Placet*," and before ten o'clock he was at the stake, on the same spot where Huss had burned.[1] He sang the creed and Litany and died with his lips moving in prayer. All his personal effects, and even the bedding from his prison were thrown into the fire, and the ashes were cast into the Rhine.[2]

To-day a simple stone monument, with "John Huss" on one side and "Jerome of Prague" on the other, marks the site of the death of Huss and Jerome. But the results of their martyrdom for a noble cause are found over the entire world. "The Gospel which we have," said Luther, "has been paid for by the blood of Huss and Jerome."[1] Instead of suppressing heresy, the action of the council spread it broadcast and paved the way for the great secessions of the next century. The martyrs of one age became the saviours of the next. One of the grandest blows for individual religious freedom had been struck. Bohemia was kindled into a flame of bitter wrath because the people viewed the treatment of their heroes as a national insult. Bohemia was made the home of heresy in the eyes of the world. It is no matter of surprise, therefore, to see the outbreak of the Hussite wars which threatened the very existence of the imperial rule.

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[1] Hardt, iii, 55–60; iv, 763–71.

[2] Ib., iii, 64–71; iv, 771–2; Richental, 83; Vrie, *Conc. Constant.*, viii, Dist. 3.

102. *Other Cases of Heresy before the Council*

John of Chlum, the noble defender of Huss, remained in Constance in the power of the council. He too would have suffered the fate of the two martyrs, no doubt, had he not recanted on 1st July, 1416, and promised to maintain the faith. He was forced to admit that Huss and Jerome had suffered justly, and to send letters back to Bohemia announcing his recantation.[2]

The case of the Brothers of the Common Life, whose houses for men and for women had spread over the Netherlands, down the Rhine Valley, and across northern Germany, and who were confused with the Beghards and Brethren of the Free Spirit, and hence accused of heresy, was brought before the Council of Constance. In this instance D'Ailly and Gerson became their defenders and explained that the Brothers were groups of devoted Christians, who lived in common, without vows, put all their earnings in a joint treasury, and chose the best men among them as leaders. This common life necessitated certain social and personal restraints, seemly conduct and a life of real service in the spirit of Love. To prevent the appearance of classes among them they wore simple clothing with black caps. They were engaged in all kinds of employments, according to their ability and education. Some were only day labourers and were mostly engaged in gardening and farming; others worked at trades; and the most educated among them were teachers, copyists, and priests. Their form of worship was simple and spiritual. They studied the Scriptures, and gave themselves up to religious meditation and to prayers. Worship was confined to small circles of friends and special confession to friends was emphasized. Those who wanted a more spiritual life entered the monastery at Windesheim, or some other Augustinian establishment. They laid great stress on the education of children, and hence schools were connected with all the houses. As a result of the sympathetic explanations of the two French reformers, the Brothers were acquitted of all charges of heresy, and they were permitted to continue their good work.

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[1] Mounier, 178.

[2] *Chron. Glassberger* ann. 1416.

The Brethren of the Common Life had aroused the opposition of the old monastic orders, and were fiercely attacked by the friars on the ground of irregularity and illegality. Matthias Grabow, a Dominican of Grönigen, wrote a book against them, in which he denied their right to usurp the manner of life and the three vows of the established monastic orders. When reproved by the Bishop of Utrecht he appealed to the supreme Pontiff Martin V who submitted the case to a commission of theologians among whom were D'Ailly and Gerson. On 3rd April, 1418, Gerson reported an examination of the theses of Grabow, and pronounced them erroneous, heretical, and worthy of condemnation. He declared that any one could practice the perfect religious life of Christ either with or without vows; otherwise, if only regular monks monopolized that life, prelates and even Popes would be excluded from it. Thus the medieval conception of the perfection of monastic life received a severe jolt, and henceforth the Brethren were unmolested and received Papal recognition.[1]

Another case brought before the Council of Constance was that of the Franciscan, Paris professor and doctor of the Sorbonne, Jean Petit. The problem grew out of the political condition of France. Under the half-insane king, Charles VI (1380–1422), royal power was reduced to a shadow, and consequently rival factions sought to obtain control of the government. As a result the king's cousin, Louis, Duke of Orleans, was killed in the streets of Paris at the instigation of the king's uncle, John, Duke of Burgundy. Jean Petit was employed to defend the murder, so prepared nine propositions, which were read before the royal court on 8th March, 1408, and later exposed for sale. He argued that any lord who plotted against his sovereign deserved death in body and soul. As a traitor and tyrant, according to the laws of nature and God, any one would be justified in killing him, and might lie and deceive to accomplish his noble purpose. The higher in rank the traitor stood, the more meritorious would be the deed. The king should cherish and reward such an act of loyalty. Scholastic philosophy, the classical writers, and the Bible were cited to prove his contention. The conclusion was that the Duke of Orleans was guilty of treason against the king, and consequently his assassination was commendable.[1]

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[1] Creighton, ii, 115.

John Gerson, in a public address, took the negative side of the case, and called upon the king to suppress and repudiate Petit's thesis. The University of Paris became the champion of Gerson's position, Petit died in 1411, and thus escaped trial for heresy, but the controversy went on. The Bishop of Paris condemned Petit and his views, and a national council held in 1413 ordered the nine propositions to be burned as erroneous and scandalous, which was done in front of Notre Dame. Thereupon the Duke of Burgundy appealed to John XXIII, who appointed a committee of three cardinals to examine the case and report.[2] Charles VI, on the other hand, no doubt at the advice of Gerson, wrote a letter to the Council of Constance on 27th December, asking it to approve the condemnation of Petit. Thus the local question was made a European problem.

In his first address before the council on 23rd March, 1415, Gerson urged the condemnation of the nine theses of Petit. More important matters engaged the attention of the council, however, and it was not until 15th June that a motion was made to create a commission to deal with new heresies, and D'Ailly, Orsini, Aquileia, and Florence were named from the cardinals, together with two representatives for Italy, and four each for the other three nations, making eighteen in all. On 6th July, at the fifteenth session the council sought to compromise the case by condemning the teaching that a tyrant without judicial sentence, might be killed by any one, even by treacherous means, and in the face of an oath, without committing perjury. Thus the general principle was stated without mentioning the name of Petit. A long and bitter wrangle ensued in the council, in which Gerson in a pet asserted that if Huss had been given an advocate he would not have been burned, because the heresy of Petit was more pernicious than the errors of Wiclif and Huss. For two years Gerson pressed the matter before the council, and delivered his last address on the subject on 17th January, 1417, but failed to persuade the council to change its early decision. The Duke of Burgundy secured possession of Paris in 1418, and Gerson was forced to become a refugee in Austria until the Duke's assassination in the following year, when he returned to Lyons, and remained in monastic seclusion until his death in 1429.[1]

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[1] Denifle, *Chartularium*, iv, 261–85, 325; Schwab, 609.

[2] Schwab, 620.

In the midst of the disputes, Jean de Rocha, a Franciscan, presented 25 articles drawn from Gerson's own writings, as heretical. The Bishop of Arras made similar accusations against D'Ailly. It seemed wise to the council, under such fierce personal attacks, to defer the whole matter to the future Pope.

In Poland the Dominican, John von Falkenberg, in sermons and in a tract had also justified the theory of tyrannicide against the King of Poland—apparently at the instigation of the king's enemies, the Teutonic Knights. Early in 1417, the case had been presented to the commission of faith, which condemned the doctrines and ordered the pamphlet to be burned, but its formal condemnation was left to the new Pope. When Martin V refused to act, the Poles threatened to appeal to a future council. To check such a dangerous course the Pope issued the following constitution on 10th March: "No one may appeal from the supreme judge, that is the apostolic seat of the Roman Pontiff, vicar on earth of Jesus Christ, or may decline his authority in matters of faith." On 22nd April, the Poles again in council demanded the condemnation of the pamphlet of Falkenberg, otherwise they would appeal to a future council, so finally the Pope condemned the pamphlet.[2]

The results of the efforts of the Council of Constance to extirpate heresy in Western Europe must have appeared far from satisfactory to the members of the Council. Wiclif was condemned and Huss and Jerome were put to death, but the

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[1] Lea, *Hist. of Inq.*, iii, 338.

[2] Alzog, ii, 872.

English movement was not crushed, the Bohemian uprising was more dangerous than before, and all Europe was honeycombed with heresy. The day had passed when heresy could be crushed by conciliar edicts and the use of physical punishment. The dangerous ideas which threatened the disruption of the Church and the overthrow of Papal power spread with alarming rapidity and could be checked only by removing the causes which had produced them. Many of the leaders of the liberal reform party in the Church, in discussing the evils and abuses so prevalent in Christendom and in urging revolutionary methods of getting rid of them, had themselves in sermons and pamphlets followed a course dangerously near heresy, and Wiclif, Huss, and Jerome had simply carried their suggestions out to their logical conclusions. The persistent eagerness of some of the liberals like D'Ailly, Gerson, and Zabarella to persuade Huss and Jerome to recant clearly indicates a strong undercurrent of sympathy for them in the council, but the huge ecclesiastical machine running in the groove of canon law and the precedent sanctified by centuries was so powerful that it could not be checked when once set in motion even in the interest of mercy and progress. This group of men in the council would have repudiated their own professions of loyalty to the Church, and would have thrown themselves open to severe censure, if indeed not to suspicions of abetting heretics, had they openly gone further. Hence in the enthusiasm of the hour it is not strange that they seemed to give their hearty support to the proceedings, and even posed as champions of the good name and doctrines of the Church. The death of a few heretics was nothing compared to the salvation of the mighty organization to which they belonged, and on which they depended for their honours and livelihood. Whatever prickings of conscience they may have felt were probably set at rest by the sincere hope of inaugurating a thoroughgoing reformation of all the ills from which the Church suffered.

CHAPTER XV

THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE: III. ATTEMPTS TO SECURE REFORMS

103. *Universal demand for Reformation*: *Decree Sacrosancta, 6th April*, 1415

UNION, heresy, and reform were the three problems before Constance. In the opening days of the council, the progressive-liberal party demanded first the healing of the schism, while the conservatives first urged the consideration of the suppression of heresy, to offset the cry for union, and when that failed, they tried to force reformation as the most pressing issue.

The whole council was united upon the desirability of a genuine reformation. A theologian of the day exclaimed: "The whole world—the clergy and all Christian people, know that a reform of the Church Militant is both necessary and expedient." Another cried: "Heaven and the very elements demand reform; it is called for by the sacrifice of the Precious Blood mounting up to Heaven. The very stones will soon be constrained to join the cry." Rocquain asserts that the demand for reform was "universal". It came from saints and sinners, theologians and canonists, priests and laymen, monks and bishops, princes and subjects.

Many in the Council of Constance believed that reform was quite as important as unity, since it was urged by some that the evils and abuses in the Church had been the cause of the Great Schism. The Germans particularly believed that the necessity for reformation even overshadowed the need of a true ecclesiastical head. Nor did they hesitate to declare that it was precisely the Pope and the cardinals who needed reformation most. Hence they urged that when both were weak was the best time to bring it about. This was the psychological moment to enact these reforms into canon law, so that they would have to be obeyed and could not easily be evaded by the new Pontiff when elected. Early in 1415 they drew up a detailed programme dealing with the disposition of benefices in Germany.[1]

On 7th December, 1414, John XXIII and the cardinals presented an outline of reformation limited to the Papal household, as a beginning.[2]

From the outset it was evident that the elaboration of a single reform code for the whole Church would be beset with insuperable difficulties, and hence it was seen that the reformation would have to follow two courses: (1) a general reformation of the entire Church, and (2) a special reformation to meet the particular needs of the individual nations.

After the deposition of John XXIII on 29th May, 1415, the resignation of Gregory XII on 4th July, and the burning of Huss on 6th July, the reform sentiment became very pronounced. Up to that time reforms had been broached only in the national congregations. The committee on faith had declared itself in favour of reformation, but had made no definite recommendations.[3] After the departure of Sigismund on 18th July, to persuade Benedict XIII to resign, the cardinals took the initiative in the movement for reformation, and were resolved not to let the leadership pass out of their hands.[4]

The fundamental principle on which the council proceeded in its projects to reform the Church was incorporated in the decree *Sacrosancta* passed by the council on 6th April, 1415:

"This holy synod of Constance, constituting a general council for the extirpation of the present schism and the union and reformation of the Church of God in head and members, legitimately assembled in the Holy Ghost, to the praise of omnipotent God, in order that it may the more easily, safely, effectively, and freely bring about the union and reformation of the Church of God, hereby determines, decrees, ordains, and declares what follows":

1. That this council, "representing the Catholic Church Militant, has its power immediately from Christ, and every one, whatever his position or rank, even if it be the Papal dignity itself, is bound to obey it in all things which pertain to the faith,

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[1] Goldast, i, 393; Hardt, *Proleg.*, 32; Kinke, *Gesch. der Viener Univ.*, ii, 49.

[2] Hardt, iv, 23; Loserth, 477.

[3] Hardt, i, 574; Hübler, 6–8.

[4] Hübler, 8.

to the healing of the schism, and to the general reformation of the Church of God in head and members."

2. That any one, even the Pope, "who shall contumaciously refuse to obey the mandates, decrees, ordinances, or instructions," passed by this council, or any other legitimate general council, "which concern, or in any way relate to, the above-mentioned objects, shall, unless he repudiates his conduct, be subjected to condign penance and be suitably punished, having recourse, if necessary, to the resources of the law."[1]

104. *First Reform Commission and its Work*

The first reform commission was appointed, after a hot discussion, between 26th July and 1st August, 1415.[2] It consisted of thirty-five members—eight from each of the four nations, and three cardinals, Zabarella, D'Ailly, and Adimari.[3] The work assigned to the commission was to reform the Papal Curia, but it did not limit itself to that task. There was no lack of materials, such as sermons, memoirs, pamphlets, and lists of evils giving in the greatest detail the reforms desired, on which the commission could base its recommendations. Apparently the commission began its labours at once, for Pulka wrote home on 24th August, that they were working daily on the reformation of the Church.[4] The difficult problem before the commission was: Where would they begin to enact reform legislation? Although all members of the council were anxious for something to be done, yet each order regarded its own interests and rights as sacred and suggested the reformation of the other classes. Hence unanimous action on any adequate scheme of reformation seemed to be out of the question. No group was willing to begin by reforming itself. Consequently the commission found in a short time that it would have to proceed slowly and very cautiously. "The reforms which one nation desires, another rejects," wrote Pulka.

The French were very anxious either to reform or abolish the pernicious system of *annates*.[4] But the cardinals opposed the abolition on the ground that the *annates* were the chief support of the Pope and the curia, hence the question was postponed. The failure of this effort to secure common action in removing such a widespread evil dampened the ardour of the leaders of reform. The French delegates were particularly disappointed, since the *annates* had weighed so heavily upon them during the period of the Schism, because under the system all benefices were subject to this tax which amounted to half of the first year's income. The Italian benefices were of small value and payment was commonly refused; and in Germany and England the powerful bishops resisted the tax. The French claimed that they paid more than all the other nations put together, which was in all likelihood true.[1] The French nation then proposed the abolition of the *annates* and the appointment of a commission to make some other provision for the Pope and the cardinals, but the other nations refused to recommend the reform, and it was dropped. Later on the new Pope made a concordat with France, in which he agreed to remit one-half of the *annates*.

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[1] The rest of the decree related to John XXIII, who had fled from Constance. The decree is given in Robinson, *Readings*, i, 511; *Transl. and Rep.*, iii, No. 6, p. 30.

[2] Hübler, 8, 9.

[3] Ib., 10.

[4] Hardt, i, 761; Finke, *Forsch.*, 283.

The German nation moved on 19th December that measures be taken to suppress simony. The proposal was strongly favoured by the lower clergy and the laity, but was opposed by the higher clergy and the nobles. After considerable discussion a special commission was appointed in November to consider the proposal.[2]

During the long sessions of the council numerous memorials were presented covering every imaginable abuse in the Church. In general congregations of the nations, in meetings of the individual nations, and in the full sessions of the council, reformation was thoroughly discussed. The academic equality of many of the members and the exceptional freedom of debate in the meeting of the nations made Constance an ideal forum for a searching consideration of all points and methods of the grave problem. More would have been accomplished, no doubt, if the leaders of the council had been able to reach some degree of unanimity as to the importance and desirability of various reforms; the order in which they should be taken up for action; the necessity of personal reformation on the part of all classes of clergy; and if there had been less passion in denouncing the Pope and the cardinals. The organization of the council by nations also hindered the work because the leaders of the liberal party were thus broken up into national cliques opposing one another. The reforms most widely called for were the restoration of the episcopal right of collation, a decrease in ecclesiastical taxation, and the purification of the Papal Curia.

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[1] Bourgeois du Chastenet, 409–78.

[2] Hardt, i, 627.

Apparently the next subject taken up for consideration was reformation of the Benedictine Order. The fourth Lateran Council in 1215 had decreed that the Benedictine houses, which had been entirely independent, should be federated in each ecclesiastical province for mutual help and maintenance of discipline. The abbots were ordered to hold tri-annual provincial chapters to pass necessary laws and to appoint visitors to inspect the various monastic societies for the purpose of correcting various evils. Little attention was paid to the legislation, however, except in England, and the abuses among the Benedictines continued. In 1336 Benedict XII by the bull *Benedictina* sought to secure general observance of the practice of holding provincial chapters and of enforcing canonical visitations, without destroying the traditional independence of each house, but again little heed was given to the Papal instructions. Consequently the Benedictine convents were notoriously lax and corrupt. The vicious system of commendatory abbots was widely denounced. The reform party in the Church was determined to reorganize and thus to purify the Benedictines. The council, after some general discussion of the question, could arrive at no conclusion and on 19th February, 1416, appointed a commission to bring in recommendations, and thus this problem was postponed.

The reformatory efforts were still further weakened and hindered by a letter from Sigismund on 5th April, begging the council to suspend definite action on all important matters until his return. He recommended, however, that the council devote its attention to the reformation of the clergy, especially in Germany, on such points as manners, dress, conduct, morals, and the prevention of hereditary claims over the lands of the Church. Meanwhile the consideration of the case of Jean Petit, which Sigismund had advised them to take up, gave rise to bitter personal attacks in the council and aroused national antagonisms, particularly between the French and the English.

Now that the Spanish had joined the council on 15th October, 1416, the French insisted that either the English be added to the German nation in voting, or that some other more equitable method be devised. In the end no change was made and the Spaniards voted as a fifth nation. The council had acted with remarkable unanimity in deposing the three pretenders to the Papal throne, and in the condemnation of Wiclif, Huss, and Jerome. It was most unfortunate, therefore, that the great international congress was broken up into factions by personal hostilities and national quarrels when it came to consider the serious problem of a complete reformation of the Church. If a radical and adequate reformation was accomplished, it had to be done by the council. If the question was left to the new Pope and the cardinals, it was certain to fall far short of what was recognized on all sides as necessary, because such grave evils as *annates* and collations, so vital to the income of the Curia, would not be abandoned, nor would the Papacy itself be thoroughly purified. Another unfortunate division began to appear between the lower clergy and the laity, on the one hand, and the higher clergy and nobles on the other. Revolutionary sermons were preached and tracts written by the monks and priests; and the bishops and cardinals complained of the inconsiderate treatment they received in the council. On 17th April, 1415, a priest actually proposed to exclude the cardinals from all deliberations on union and reform. As time passed the hostility grew more and more bitter. The council was seriously divided over another issue: some wanted to proceed to elect a new Pope before taking up reform, while others insisted that reform should precede the election of a Pope.

At length the commission on reforms, after fourteen months of labour, made the first report on 8th October, 1416, in a tentative form, arranged by chapters.[1] The first six chapters dealt with the reformation of the Curia and provided for the holding of future councils with power to depose wicked Popes and to avoid schisms. The Pope's duties were defined and his relation to the cardinals regulated. The cardinals' qualifications were prescribed and eighteen fixed as the full number of the college.[2] Simoniacal prelates were denounced and recommendations made to eliminate the evil.[3] These first six chapters were drawn up in the form of decrees for the council to pass.

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[1] Hardt, i, 583; Hübler, ii.

[2] Ch. 5.

[3] Ch. 4.

The second part of the report, containing chapters 7 to 23 inclusive, consisted of recommendations for reform intended as a basis for discussion: such as curial officers, spoliations, procurations, reservations, provisions, elections, pluralism, dispensations, absenteeism, age of bishops, lawsuits at Rome, tithes, care of converts, exemptions of religious orders and like subjects. Many of the most pernicious abuses from which Christendom suffered were included in this section.

The third part, containing chapters 24 to 39 inclusive, was made up of a number of conclusions which had resulted from questions and suggestions before the commission. It was advised that exemptions and privileges to lower prelates should be revoked; that local clergy should know the vernacular; that translations should be avoided; that the union of benefices was injurious; that the residence of bishops and abbots should either be enforced or the benefices surrendered; that taxes should be reduced to those absolutely necessary; that simoniacs should be driven out of the Church; that the reformation of canons and prebends should be undertaken; that eighteen years should be the age limit at which candidates were taken into monastic orders, or ordained as priests; that provincial synods should be held frequently; that only the most important cases should go to Rome for Papal decision and all exorbitant curial fees should be abolished; that concubinage should be strictly forbidden; that only good men, well-educated and of excellent character, and not soldiers and nobles, should be made Church officers; that the "damnable abuse" of the *annates* should not be forced on the clergy, but abolished; and that the heavy exactions imposed on the clergy by the princes should be removed.

The fourth and last part, embracing chapters 40 to 44 inclusive, consisted of supplementary protocols advising the recall of the auditor of the Camera at Avignon because the office was superfluous, the revocations of all extra curial concessions, the enforcement of uniformity of dress and tonsure on the clergy, the appointment of well-educated and not idiotic vicars by prelates, and the regulation of oaths required of cardinals before conclaves. The last chapter dealt with the quarrels of the prelates in the council.

This report touched only on the flagrant and obvious abuses in the Church and contained nothing that was radical or fundamental. Almost any provincial synod might have made most of the recommendations. Such weighty problems as the reorganization of the Papal system, or the revision of the constitution of the Church, were not even raised. Mild and inadequate as the report was, the council did not even consider it, so with no powerful impulse in the council to go ahead with the work, the labours of the reform commission came to a standstill in the autumn of 1416.

Outside of the council, however, in many tracts and in conversation the question of reformation was kept alive. D'Ailly in his *capita agendorum* proposed as conditions of election to the college of cardinals: legitimate birth, a pure life, a stainless reputation, a thorough education, business ability, and an age limit of 30 years. He also suggested that theologians should be given a preponderant representation.[1] Others suggested that measures should be taken to prevent good-for-nothing men from becoming cardinals; that relatives within four degrees should be debarred,[2] that the Pope should not be permitted to nominate any of his relatives, and that all family wire-pulling and log-rolling should be eliminated. Others proposed that the monastic orders should be restricted to one cardinal each in the college, so that the condition of 1381, when the begging orders had seven members, could not be repeated.[3] Still others suggested that not only relatives, but families, should be excluded from the college, that not more than a single cardinal from each ecclesiastical province should be allowed,[4] and that each cardinal should be given a definite salary.[5] These suggestions were quite generally approved by members of the council.[6]

In January, 1417, Sigismund returned to the council.

105. *Second Reform Commission*

It was not until the end of July,[7] 1417, that the second reform commission was named. The technical reason given for not considering the report of the first commission was that the Spanish nation was not represented on it. To add Spanish members to it, so the protest ran, would make it too unwieldy. Hence a new commission was appointed, consisting of 25 members, doctors and prelates, five from each of the five nations, to take up the work of its predecessor. To preserve the continuity with the first body two of the former members from each nation were reappointed.[1] The cardinals were not represented [2] on the new commission, but it seems that they sent three delegates to confer with it.[3] On 7th August, the commission adopted an order of business, agreed to elect a president weekly, arranged to meet on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, and began the difficult task of revising the report of the first body.[4] The first problem taken up was the Pope and his court, after which the reformation of the higher prelates was considered.

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[1] Hardt, i, 594.

[2] Hinschius, *Kirchenrechts*, i, 342.

[3] Souchon, ii, 211; Hübler, 128.

[4] Döllinger, *Beiträge*, ii, 322.

[5] Souchon, ii, 218.

[6] Ib., 211.

[7] Ib., ii, 195; Hübler, 20.

The report of the second reform commission [5] in chapters 1 to 6 made recommendations to reform the Pope and the Curia, and to avoid schism. Chapter 7 dealt with the election of higher clergy in Germany; Chapter 8 urged the necessity of appointing educated men to the higher places in the Church; Chapter 9 protested against the transfer of prelates; and Chapter 10 discussed the best method of getting rid of simoniacs.

As the discussions over reform proceeded in the council, it became quite apparent that two distinct points of view developed over the burning question of the collation of benefices. One party advocated the *status quo*, defended the Papal right of collation as pertaining to the dogma of Papal primacy, and said it could not be impaired. This theory put all spiritual offices in the hands of the Pope and had been developed during the Babylonian Captivity and Schism. It was upheld by the Papal party composed of the cardinals, the Spaniards, and most of the Italians and French, and by a section of the reform party, namely the representatives of the French, German, and English universities.[6] The other party stood on historical ground—saw in expectancies and reservations only a usurpation—and sought to reconstruct the original right of provisions. Their ideas were upheld by the liberal party with Sigismund at its head, composed of the

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[1] Ib., 216; Hübler, 21.

[2] Ib., 216.

[3] Hardt, iv, 1398.

[4] Finke, 217.

[5] Hardt, i, 650.

[6] Hübler, 25; Loserth, 477.

English and Germans, and some of the cardinals. As a rule the higher clergy favoured this disposition of the case. This division of opinion, based on selfish reasons, was the occasion of a spirited debate and prevented a settlement of the question of benefices.[1] For political reasons the English finally went over to the Papal party, and the Germans were left alone. By September, 1417, the breach was so marked that the Germans were charged with attempting to create a new schism.[2] Indeed, at one time, it looked as if the council would break up without either securing union or obtaining reformation.[3] Only a compromise urged by the Bishop of Winchester, the uncle of Henry V of England, produced peace, but victory was with the Papal party.[4]

Meanwhile the discussions over reforms were disturbed by the insistence of the cardinals on the election of a new Pope. They had canvassed the nations and were certain of the support of Italy, France, and Spain. Hence on 9th September 1417, in a general congregation they proposed that the election of a new Pope be taken up, but without prejudice, however, to the cause of reformation. The liberal-reform party shouted their protests and Sigismund with the Patriarch of Antioch left the cathedral. Two days later the cardinals declared that they wished a reformation as much as did the Germans, but that the first great reformation needed was to remedy the monstrous condition of a headless Church, after which the Pope and the Council in common could proceed to reform the Church.[5] The English then deserted to the Papal party. The Emperor loaded them with abuse and threatened vengeance on the cardinals. The Germans on 14th September answered the cardinals by saying that the chair of the Pope needed cleansing before it was fit for a new Pope. The cardinals were simply attempting to preserve their usurpation of ecclesiastical patronage, and to protect *annates*, simony, and the abuses of the Papal law courts. The reformers asserted that a correction of abuses alone would prevent a new schism in the Church. The deadlock continued for weeks until both sides grew weary. The Papal party succeeded finally in reducing the opposition by splitting the German nation and winning men like the Bishops of Riga and Chur.[1] Sigismund could hold out no longer, and finally in October gave his consent to the election of a Pope on condition that the council would promise that immediately after his election and before his coronation the work of reformation should be taken up. The cardinals hesitated to give such a guarantee and raised certain technical objections. The history of reformation at Pisa should have been a warning for Constance.[2]

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[1] Hübler, 26; Loserth, 477.

[2] Hardt, i, 916, 922.

[3] Loserth, 478.

[4] Creighton, ii, 97-8.

[5] Hardt, i, 919.

106. *The Five Reform Decree of 9th October, 1417*

Although the friends of reform had an overwhelming majority in the council willing to proceed with the election of a Pope, that by no means meant that the reform party had surrendered its determination to carry out its programme. Hence the conservatives thought it a matter of wisdom to permit the enactment of certain reform measures on which there was general agreement. Consequently on 9th October, 1417, five reform decrees were enacted by the Council—the first fruits of an agitation and discussion carried on for two years.

1. The famous decree *Frequens* stated that through the neglect to hold councils of the Church oftener "a most abundant harvest" of briers, thorns, and thistles, to wit, heresies, errors, and schism "grew up in the field of the Lord", therefore "by a perpetual edict" it was ordained that a general council should be called five years after the dissolution of Constance, the second council seven years after the close of that one, and thereafter councils should be held every ten years, in such places as the Pope should be required to designate. Thus with a certain continuity, a council would always be either in session, or be expected at the expiration of a definite time. "The term might be shortened on account of emergencies" by the Pope in consultation with the cardinals, but could never be lengthened. The place designated for the future council could not be changed "without evident necessity", such as war, the plague, or other obstacle, and in that event another place within the same country could be selected by the Pope and at least two-thirds of the cardinals. Should the whole country be unavailable for the above reasons, then a place in an adjoining country should be selected for the

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[1] Hardt, iv, 1427.

[2] Hübler, 30.

council. In all instances of the change of place or shortening of the term, the supreme Pontiff was required to publish and announce the fact one year before the expiration of the term fixed.

2. The second measure passed was for the purpose of preventing the outbreak of another schism in the Church by giving the council the right to convoke itself at any time to take such steps as were necessary.

3. The next regulation required the Pope, newly chosen, to proclaim his profession of faith in the presence of the sacred college before his election was publicly announced.

4. Greater security was guaranteed to the clergy by forbidding the Pope to make translations of the prelates against their will.

5. The last act curtailed the Pope's power to reserve for his own use benefices vacated by the death of the holders or to demand procurations due at visitations.[1]

Of these five reform sops thrown out to win the liberal party, decrees 2 and 3 were the products of the new conception of the constitution of the Church, which the liberals had already proclaimed in the third, fourth, and fifth general sessions. Decrees 1 and 4 were taken out of the report of the second reform commission and 5 was a new measure.[2]

After the passage of these reforms an understanding was reached that after the election of a Pope those recommendations made in the report of the reform commission, concerning which all nations were agreed, should be laid before the council for approval. Then on 11th October commissioners were named to determine the method of choosing the new head of Christendom, about which there was considerable divergence of opinion. The Germans proposed that each nation select fifteen electors and that the fifteen cardinals act for Italy, while the scheme of the French was to have thirty prelates and doctors, six from each of the five nations, unite with the cardinals, to elect the new Pontiff. The latter arrangement was ultimately adopted.

On 30th October, the council decreed, in accordance with the terms arranged:

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[1] Robinson, *Readings*, i, 512; *Transl. and Rep.*, iii, No. 6, p. 31. Hardt, iv, 1435.

[2] Hübler, 33.

1. That the future Pope, either with the council or with deputies of the several nations, should reform the Papacy and the Roman curia by enacting eighteen specific recommendations embodied in the report of the reform commission, such as granting benefices, *annates*, Papal reservations, and the character and nationality of cardinals.[1] It was provided that in case deputies were named to co-operate with the Pope in the work of reformation the remaining members of the council might go home.[2] This was a great victory for the cardinals, because it meant that the whole question of reformation would be taken out of the hands of the council and put into the hands of the Pope, cardinals, and single nations. The idea was not new because D'Ailly had advocated that plan from the outset.[3] Furthermore this arrangement limited reformation to the head of the Church and the curia, and made no reference to the "members" talked so much about, that is to the entire Church—and the eighteen points to be considered were specifically indicated. This adjustment of the problem of reformation, which was such a burning question, fell far short of the reform programme of the liberal party, meant a surrender of the dream of a searching general reformation, and was an ignominious defeat of the liberal party.[4] The enthusiasm for reform was spent in months of bickering.

2. That the French plan of electing the Pope be followed, namely by the appointment (within ten days) of six deputies from each of the six nations, to unite with the cardinals. A vote of two-thirds of the cardinals and two-thirds of the representatives of each nation was necessary for an election.

107. *Election of Martin V: the Third Reform Commission*

No sooner had the council passed these decrees than preparations for the election of a new Pope monopolized the entire interest of the members—even Sigismund seemed to forget his insistence upon reformation and heartily co-operated in the arrangements for the conclave, which by oath he guaranteed to protect. The fifty-three members of the conclave, after services in the cathedral, were conducted by the electors with the Emperor at their head to the old Kaufhaus, where they swore with their hands in Sigismund's to conduct an honest election. They voted by secret paper ballot, and on the third ballot chose Oddo Colonna, a cardinal of a noble Roman family which had given the Church twenty-seven cardinals, and who during the council had preserved a dignified neutrality in all the struggles and conflicts. He was 41 years of age, had studied at the University of Perugia, held office under Urban VI and Boniface IX, was given the cardinal's hat in 1405, deserted Gregory XII to hold the Council of Pisa, and had helped to elect Alexander V and John XXIII. A great canonist, strictly orthodox, of good morals, and reasonably conservative in his views, his election gave universal satisfaction and thus permanently healed the Schism.[1] The electors, according to the custom, placed the new Pope on his throne, kissed his feet, and chanted the *Te Deum*. Sigismund hastened to the conclave and thanked the electors for their choice of so worthy a man, knelt before him and kissed his feet. A solemn procession was then formed, the Pope-elect was mounted on a horse, Sigismund and Frederick of Brandenburg held the bridle, and thus he was escorted to the cathedral, where after a solemn thanksgiving, he took the name of Martin V. Since Colonna was not the candidate of the French party, the Germans did not raise the question of reforms before the coronation ceremony, which took place on 21st November.[2] It was simply taken for granted that a man of his known integrity and piety would as a matter of course favour reformation. His first act, however, was to confirm the rules of the Papal chancery issued by John XXIII against which there had been such an outcry because they legalized and protected the abuses of the Curia.[3] This act struck at the very roots of the reformatory efforts of the liberal party in the council, because it perpetuated that system by which the Papacy had managed to divert to itself so large a portion of the income of the Church, and which the reform party was determined to eradicate. The regulations were not formally published, however, until 26th February, 1418, and it may be that their content was not definitely known in November and consequently no suspicions were aroused.

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[1] Hardt, iv, 1452; Hefele, vi, 324; Hübler, 39.

[2] Hardt, iv, 1449; Hübler, 35.

[3] Hardt, ii, 197.

[4] Schwab, 662; Hübler, 39.

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[1] Hardt, iv, 1484.

[2] Ib., 1462.

[3] Ib., i, 965; Phillips, iv, 489; Hübler, 40.

Immediately after his coronation, Martin V on 21st November, 1417, named the third reform commission which was composed of thiry-six members—six cardinals, and six deputies from each of the five nations.[1] Cardinal Filastre recorded in his diary that for an entire month the commission rested and did nothing, but with the beginning of 1418 its activities commenced.[2] It soon appeared that there was no unanimity and the old divisions reappeared. The French and Germans desired to abolish Papal provisions, while the representatives of the universities joined with the Italians and Spanish to uphold in their own selfish interest the old rights of the Pope. The English had settled the question by the statutes of *provisors*, and hence were indifferent, and argued for the *status quo*. So closely related were the Church and the State, that every effort to reform the Church touched some national prerogative. This network of relationships was so intricate, that every effort at reform and every proposed change seemed to some group like a revolution. So the very organization of the council by nations, which was intended to thwart the Italian prelates, was mostly responsible for the failure of an adequate reformation of the Church.[3] In the fierce wrangle over collations, provisions, *annates*, and the right of ordination, the French appealed to Sigismund to use his influence for the liberal programme, but he replied: "When I was desirous that reforms should come before the election of a new Pope, you would not hear me. Well, you have a Pope now; go ask him for reforms. My power has waned since the Pope was chosen and I have no longer the same interest in the matter as I had before." [4] Evidently he had given up the cause of reform as hopeless, and from this time on thought only of making the best terms possible for himself. Martin V formally recognized him as King of the Romans on 23rd January, 1418, and a few days later bestowed upon him a tenth of the revenues of three German provinces to reimburse him for the expenses he had incurred in behalf of the council.[5] Seven German churches remonstrated to the council against this grant.[6]

[1] Hübler, 41; Finke, 235; Hardt, iv, 1492.

[2] Finke, 236, 238.

[3] Hübler, 41.

[4] Hardt, iv, 1503.

[5] Hardt, ii, 589, 592.

[6] Ib., 608.

108. *Failure of a general reformation : decrees of March*, 14~~2~~18

By this time it had become apparent to everybody that the common movement for a general reformation of the whole Church was doomed to failure because of the insuperable national conflicts and jealousies, on the one hand, and the indifference and weariness which three years of endeavour had entailed, on the other. Besides the new Pope and the college of cardinals were now in the ascendancy, and could successfully thwart any movement by playing off one national faction against another. Hence all thought and effort to secure a general reformation through the council came to an end, while the various factions made a grand scramble to obtain from the Pope by separate agreements such advantages as they could secure on behalf of their respective nations. Martin V had discreetly refrained from stating his intentions in the general confusion and permitted the reform party to wreck itself on the rocks of national selfishness. When urged to declare his position, he courteously replied that he would gladly do all within his power to aid reformation when the nations agreed upon a definite programme. On 18th January, 1418, he took up the eighteen specific reforms stipulated in the decree of 30th October, 1417, on the enactment of which the Germans had agreed to the election of a Pope. To seventeen points he agreed, with some slight amendments, but on the remaining recommendation which dealt with the " causes for which a Pope could be admonished or deposed ", he gave his dissent remarking : " It does not seem good to us, as it did not to several nations, that on this point anything new should be determined or decreed." The modified resolutions were then submitted to the council for action, but notwithstanding the urgent appeals of the Pope to come to some conclusion, the old discords and disagreements blocked any unanimous decision.[1] The chaos of the council necessitated the resumption of the old powers of the Papacy, which the council had been called to combat and to modify.

After two more months of tiresome collisions of national interests and aimless discussion, the lofty expectations of a genuine reformation of all the abuses with which the council had convened three years before, dwindled down to seven reform decrees. Even out of the eighteen articles stipulated on 30th October, 1417, and recommended by the Pope with some slight modifications on 18th January, 1418, only these seven could be agreed upon with tolerable unanimity by the council. These seven reform decrees were passed by the general council on 21st March, 1418:

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[1] Firnhaber, 66.

1. All Papal exemptions and incorporations made since the death of Gregory XI in 1378, were withdrawn, even including those granted during the council, and the Pope was instructed to exercise this right sparingly for the future.
2. The accumulation of benefices in the hands of a single individual by the process of union was forbidden.
3. The right of the Pope to claim the ecclesiastical revenues of vacant benefices was renounced and abandoned.
4. Simony was condemned and simoniacal elections were declared illegal.
5. Dispensations permitting appointees to enjoy the revenues of benefices without ordination and consecration, thus escaping the discharge of the duties, were annulled and forbidden.
6. The authorization of tithes by the Pope was limited to cases of genuine necessity, and no tenths were to be levied in any special province without consultation with the local bishops.
7. The Pope was instructed to enjoin on all the clergy, secular and spiritual, greater regularity in dress and conduct.[1]

The first six measures were taken from the eighteen articles, and the seventh was new. These decrees did limit the prerogatives of the Pope and made some progress towards a general correction of flagrant evils, but fell sadly short of what was both needed and expected. The other points raised in the eighteen articles were settled by separate concordats, a term said to have been employed for the first time in the Council of Constance, with the various nations.[2] The council approved of the scheme of the concordats in the same session, 21st March, the nations separately accepted them, and then the council very solemnly declared that all the guarantees on which the Papal election had proceeded had been fulfilled.

[1] Hardt, 1536 sqq.; Mansi, xxvii, 1114–77; Hübler, 151 sqq.; Loserth, 479, n. 3.

[2] Stuhr, 75.

109. *The concordats*

The Germans were the first nation to realize that a general reform by the council was out of question, and that consequently the only hope of securing anything comprehensive was by a separate arrangement with the Pope. Hence in January, 1418, they presented to Martin V a series of articles calling for reforms based on the labours of the previous commission on reforms. They wanted the recommendations of the first commission put into operation, and particularly insisted on the reform of the college of cardinals. Their *Avisamenta* was a complete catalogue of their wishes.[1] Little sympathy, to say nothing of positive assistance, came from Sigismund. The German concordat, signed on 2nd May, 1418, embodied the best reform programme, and dealt with such subjects as benefices, *annates*, commendations, visitation rights, ordinations, cloisters, and the reorganization of the college of cardinals. The *annates* were to be allowed to the Pope for his present needs, but it was provided that in five years the question was to come up again for adjustment.[2] The content of the various chapters of the German concordat is as follows :—

1. The number of cardinals was limited to twenty-four, the various countries were to be equitably represented, and only worthy men chosen for the high honour, such as doctors of law or theology, not men of princely origin. Monastic representatives were to be limited.
2. Regulated ecclesiastical provisions, and reduced Papal reservations pertaining to monasteries, priories, dignities, and other benefices.
3. Removed abuses connected with *annates* and tithes, and decreased *annates*.
4. Defined what kind of cases could be appealed to the Roman court for settlement, and thus restricted the number of such appeals.
5. Limited the practice of commendations, and reduced the number.
6. Attempted to abolish the wide-spread evil of simony by appealing to the conscience of men to root it out.
7. Decreed that the publication of excommunication should

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[1] Hardt, i, 999.

[2] Mansi, xxvii, 1189.

only follow a judicial process. Intercourse with excommunicated persons was lightened by forbidding it only after the open publication of the ban.

8. Curtailed the number of dispensations granted by the Roman curia to persons of uncanonical age and to those seeking to avoid residence.

9. Regulated the income of the Pope and cardinals. The validity of the *servita communia* was recognized, but definitely designated, and misuses abolished.

10. Annulled and revoked the indulgences proclaimed for Germany since the death of Gregory XI in 1378, and limited indulgences for the future. The clergy were cautioned to handle indulgences discreetly in order to prevent scandal.

11. Fixed the validity of the concordat at five years.[1]

The decree does not appear to have had very much influence on ecclesiastical conditions in Germany. It was not even presented to the Diet, nor was any effort made to secure for it legislative authority—hence it was regarded as a compact between the Pope and the German ecclesiastics, and was fairly well observed during the period of five years for which it was granted.

The French concordat was also signed on 2nd May, and was almost a duplicate of the German document in its various provisions. The chief difference was in chapter 3, dealing with the *annates*, in which it was arranged that France should receive 50 per cent of such revenues for a period of five years. The question of indulgences raised in chapter 10 of the German concordat contained no new arrangement in the French copy. In chapter 11 the French monarch's prior claim to certain provisions was recognized.[2] In the later transactions of the Council of Constance a sort of triple entente had been formed among the three Romance countries and they had usually voted together. Hence in drawing up the concordats France acted for all three of them, and the French document was accepted by Spain and Italy as satisfactory for their needs.[3]

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[1] Hardt, i, 1056; Hübler, 166; Münch, *Sammlung Konkordate*, i, 20; Krüger, ii, 216; Mansi, xxvii, 1189.

[2] Hardt, iv, 1556; Mansi, xxvii, 1184 sqq., 1193 sqq.; Valois, *Concordats*, Paris, 1905, 376.

[3] Hübler, 47, clearly shows that the Spanish and Italian concordats had not been lost as had been supposed, but that the French concordat served for the three nations. The document is given on page 195.

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The Spanish and Italian nations had asked for reforms which did not materially affect the Papal primacy, hence they did not receive the benefit of half of the *annates* granted to the French. No mention was made of the income of the Pope and cardinals in the concordat.

So little importance was attached to the French concordat that the government determined not to recognize it. France felt more secure in falling back upon the legislation enacted in 1406, which forbade prelates to observe Papal reservations or to pay undue exactions to the Pope. In March, 1418, before the agreement reached France, royal decrees re-established the old liberties of the Gallican Church against Papal reservations and exactions. Thus France preferred to base the rights of its Church upon royal power rather than a Papal grant.[1] When the concordat was presented on 10th June to the Parlement of Paris for registration as a law of the land, it was rejected as being contrary to the laws of the realm. A few months later the Duke of Burgundy, then in control of Paris, recognized the concordat, but in 1426 the regent of France made a new convention with Martin V which superseded the old agreement.[2]

The English concordat, signed on 12th July, 1418, consisted of but six articles :—

1. Provided for the reorganization of the college of cardinals.
2. Put a check on the issue of Papal indulgences.
3. Forbade the incorporation and union of benefices.
4. Revoked the permission given bishops to wear any part of the Papal attire.
5. Limited dispensations from canonical disabilities.
6. Arranged for the due admission of Englishmen to offices in the Roman curia.[3]

Short and trivial as was the English concordat, it was in the form of a perpetual charter, and not limited to a period of five years as were the others. For all really important matters the English relied upon their own national laws rather than upon grants from the Pope. There was no reference to

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[1] *Preuves des Libertés de l'Eglise Gallicane*, ch. xxii.

[2] Kruger, ii, 216 ; Valois, *Concordats*, 376.

[3] Hardt, i, 1079 ; Hübler, 208–215 ; Mansi, xxvii, 1193.

annates or to the Papal income. The concordat was used only as a means of developing a supreme national ecclesiastical policy.

England likewise took the lofty position that the liberties of the clergy were safer when based upon royal laws than upon a concordat with the Pope.[1]

These various concordats were registered, published as Papal law, and made binding for the future according to the terms specified. They laid the foundation of the system of treaties by which the Papacy has since regulated the relations with the various European powers.

110. *Summary of the Reform Measures*

The total actual reform work of the Council of Constance was limited to:—

1. The decree *Sacrosancta* passed on 6th April, 1415.
2. The five reform decrees of 9th October, 1417, including the famous decree *Frequens*, a measure to prevent a future schism, and an effort to curtail the Pope's power.
3. The seven reform decrees passed on 21st March, 1418, limiting the prerogatives of the Pope.
4. The concordats signed with Germany, France, Italy, and Spain on 2nd May, 1418, and with England on 12th July, providing for the reorganization of the college of cardinals and the correction of numerous evils.

These measures, it is true, fell far short of the reform programme of the liberal group in the council, and sadly disappointed the hopes of the reform party throughout the Church generally. The failure to usher in a general reform of the whole Church rested, after all, more with the nations than with the Pope.[2] In the nations there was an appalling lack of efficient leadership among so many brilliant thinkers and men of liberal, progressive ideas. In the conviction that the council did not measure up to its opportunities, it is easy to become too critical and thus lose sight of the fact that some noteworthy progress was made in a genuine reformation. The following summary of the reforms will indicate just how much was accomplished :—

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[1] Creighton, ii, 119,

[2] Ib.

1. The general council was made the source of sovereign power in the Church, and the arrangement for periodical sessions introduced the parliamentary system of Church government, which was to be the future panacea for all the ills of the Church.[1]

2. Precautions were taken to prevent a renewal of the disgraceful Schism.

3. The college of cardinals was reorganized by limiting the number of cardinals to twenty-four, by providing for a more equitable distribution among the European nations, and by securing the appointment of worthy men.

4. The power and prerogatives of the Pope were curtailed by requiring him to state his profession of faith and by subjecting him to punishment and deposition for his acts. Limitations were set, likewise, to his right of spoliation, procuration, translation, collation, i.e. reservation and expectancy, taxation, i.e. *annates* and *servitia*, commendation, dispensation, *fructus medii temporis*, alienation of Church property and tithing of the clergy.[2] An effort was made to put the maintenance of the Pope and the cardinals on some definite, businesslike basis. The pontifical insignia and dress were protected from illegal use and imitation. The process of excommunication was revised. The curial offices were reformed in the interest of efficiency and the judicial power of the Curia was restricted to important cases.[3] The granting of excessive and arbitrary indulgences was regulated by giving the bishops a suspensory power in gross cases.[4] Dispensations were also restricted to meritorious applicants.[5]

5. The clergy were corrected in their morals and behaviour, and their official security was protected against the encroachments of the Pope, while despotic and unjust tithing was prevented. Simony was forbidden and an appeal was made to the conscience of the clergy to help suppress the evil. The suppression of exemptions and pluralism, together with the curtailment of the rights of the Papacy, was intended to

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[1] Hardt, i, 410. [2] Ib., 282. [3] Ib., 685 ; pt. iii, 31.

[4] See ch. 2 of the English concordat and ch. 10 of the German concordat and ch. 5 of the French.

[5] Hardt, i, 1151.

develop in the Church a body of clergy more spiritual and more devoted to their high calling.

6. The laity would be benefited both directly and indirectly by these reformatory measures.[1]

A survey of these reform measures reveals the fact that they were directly connected with the Pope, cardinals, and curia, and only indirectly affected the clergy and the laity.

The general reform articles of the thirty-ninth session, 9th October, 1417, as well as the decree passed on 6th April, 1415, dealing with conciliar power, insurance against schism, Papal profession of faith and spoliation and procurations, were questioned as to legality on the ground of the œcumenicity of the council. It was said that only those decrees passed in the 41st–45th sessions, after the election of Martin V, or those expressly approved by him as legal, were valid.[2] France at least held them to be legal and binding. Martin V in the bull *Inter cunctas*, 22nd February, 1418, approved all the acts of the council bearing on faith. Of course he did not dare to denounce or to oppose the deposition of John XXIII and Benedict XIII or he would have jeopardized the principle of apostolic succession.

The general reform articles of the 43rd session of 21st March, 1418, such as exemptions, pluralism, incomes during vacancies, simony, dispensations, tithing of the clergy, and the life and morals of the clergy, caused no strife. Pope, cardinals, and clergy all seemed to concur in them and they were passed in full council with the new Pope presiding, and were published at his command. The decree on simony was ordered to be published in every diocese by the synod of Salzburg in 1418, and no doubt the same thing was done elsewhere.[3] Bishop Anselm of Augsburg was deposed by Martin V in 1423, because he did not observe the edict about dispensations.[4] Even in 1501 and 1523 the French and Spanish still referred to the decree about tithes, and the strife with Bishop George of Passau over the rule of exemptions indicated the observance of that decree.[5] Hence it may be concluded that the reforms were generally observed throughout the Church. The legality of the concordats was not called into question. Hübler contends that all the decrees passed by the council were valid and observed, that the Papal approval of the earlier decrees was neither sought nor required, and that the Pope had no intention of denying their legality. There is no satisfactory account of just how the reforms were carried out in the Church, but there is no reason for believing that they were not generally proclaimed and enforced.[1]

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[1] Hübler, 67–117, gives a detailed account of these various reform measures. Ib., 118–214 gives the documents.

[2] Hardt, iv, 1557.

[3] Hübler, 255–6.

[4] Ib., 256.

[5] Ib., 257.

Martin V promised to eliminate the crying evils in benefices and commendations, to revise the system of taxation, and to limit the income of the cardinals to 6,000 gulden.[1] His college of cardinals consisted of seventeen Italians, eight Frenchmen, and five Spaniards, and he sought to secure a more equitable distribution of the cardinals in accordance with his promise by appointing during his pontificate six Italians, four Frenchmen, one Englishman, one German, three Spaniards, and one Greek. He appointed educated prelates to the office, and sought to exclude members of princely houses and the sons of brothers and sisters of cardinals. But he did little more in reforming the college of cardinals.[2]

The new Pontiff seemed to combine all those qualities requisite to enable him to fill his high position most worthily.[3] Had he immediately taken in hand vigorously the crucial question of reformation, his election might have been a source of unalloyed happiness to the Church. But the publication of his rules of chancery which perpetuated the abuses of the Roman Curia, showed how little was to be expected from him in the way of fundamental reforms. The few isolated measures and the concordats with the separate nations, substituted for the universal reform so urgently required, fell far short of meeting the exigencies of the situation, although of course they accomplished some good.[4] He stood between two opposing sets of forces and influences, namely, the demands of the liberals for a reorganization and purification of the whole Church, on the one hand, and the tenacious resistance offered by powerful interests long established and deeply entrenched to any attempt at serious innovations, on the other hand. Certainly the easier and perhaps the more natural course for Martin V to pursue was to appease the reformers by specious compromises, but in reality to champion the cause of the conservatives. Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that most of the proposed reforms involved a diminution of Papal prerogatives and Papal revenues. The preservation of the power and dignity of the high office to which he had been elected, therefore, forced him to look with disfavour upon the programme of the liberals. The governmental machinery of the Papacy, the college of cardinals, and the curia required a very large expenditure of money. Hence since no adequate provision was made for a fixed income for the Papal court, necessity dictated the perpetuation of the old methods of raising funds. It was certainly an unspeakable calamity that ecclesiastical affairs still retained the worldly character occasioned by the schism, and that the badly needed changes were again deferred, but the blame did not rest wholly upon the shoulders of the newly elected Roman Pontiff.

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[1] Hübler, 277. [2] Ib., 128, 209. [3] Aschbach, *Sigmunds*, ii, 300.
[4] Schwab, 662–70; Hübler, 42; Pastor, i, 209.

The 45th and last session was held on 22nd April, 1418. The Bishop of Catania preached a farewell sermon on the text: "Now ye have sorrow, but I shall see you again and your heart shall rejoice." On 19th April, Pavia had been fixed on as the seat of the next council to be held in five years. The decree of dissolution was read and indulgences were granted to those who had attended the council. Sigismund's representative explained the expense and trouble his master had incurred, thanked all the members for their attendance, expressed his joy at the reunion of the Church, and promised his support to the Church until death.[1]

Sigismund attempted to persuade Martin V to remain in Germany and offered him Basel, Strassburg, or Mainz as his seat of Papal residence. France, on the other hand, pressed the claims of fair and deserted Avignon. Had the Pope accepted either invitation it might have meant another schism, so he wisely pleaded the unsettled condition of the states of the Church[2] and left on 16th May for Italy, by way of Geneva. The members of the council quickly dispersed to their homes to report the successes and failures of the council. Sigismund was delayed by the importunities of his numerous creditors, but finally induced them to accept his fine linen and tapestries as a pledge for the debts which were all entered in ledgers, and on 21st May, rode away with his court. The pledges were never redeemed, and the debts were never paid, to the impoverishment of many of the citizens of Constance.[1]

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[1] Hardt, iv, 1553.

[2] Platina, *Vita Martina*, v, 653.

The collective wisdom of Europe, after nearly four years of discussion and endeavour, failed to bring about any adequate conservative reformation. The council shirked the opportunity to establish the true basis of a Christian life and mercilessly burned Huss because he advocated reforms and sought a higher conception of Christian living. Statesmanship and disinterested consecration to lofty purposes were sadly lacking among the Fathers. They could debate, criticize, and denounce, but they could not sacrifice their petty interests for the greater needs of Christendom. D'Ailly and Gerson in sermons and tracts both before and during the council, rang the changes on the need of reform, and in the council they were the recognized leaders of the powerful liberal reform party, but when the issue was tightly and clearly drawn they both sacrificed the general interests of the Church for the privileges of the college of cardinals and the Roman curia. Unanimous action was entirely out of the question, even on very unimportant points.

The fundamental cause of the failure of the reform movement must be attributed to the organization of the council. An ecclesiastical congress representing all of Christian Europe, organized by nations for the purpose of voting, in order to defeat the political scheming of Pope John XXIII, gave free play to all sorts of national animosities and jealousies, and thus blocked unanimous action on reforms. The nations deliberated apart, and consequently exaggerated national selfishness, while the contact with one another was just enough to intensify the national suspicions. As a result the national groups allowed the reform programme to be swallowed up in the grand scramble for the possession of the Papacy and the prestige which that monopoly would assure in European politics. Had the states of Europe exercised their full authority in attempting to realize a positive reformation, no one can doubt that it might have been accomplished, but they refused to take the initiative and consequently the great opportunity was lost.

Another cause for the defeat of the reform party was the selfish ambition of the ecclesiastical aristocracy. The higher prelates were determined to abase and weaken the Papal monarchy for the sole purpose of increasing their own powers and prerogatives. A careful study of the reports of the reform commissions clearly reveals the fact that the bishops were attempting to curtail the Papacy for the benefit of the episcopate. Just so soon as that purpose was detected, interest in the reforms proposed began to cool. The universities felt that such a change would curtail their own rights and privileges and hence became champions of Papal supremacy. The cardinals believed that their own offices were assailed, and turned a deaf ear to the cry for reforms. The most ardent reformers objected to an increase of the power of the ecclesiastical aristocracy and became luke-warm. Sigismund and the representatives of the other states saw only an attempt to invade their own rights and ceased to pose as advocates of reformation, and thus the impetus for a thoroughgoing reformation gradually died out.

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[1] Richental gives an excellent picture of these closing scenes.

Finally the ardent reformers grew weary of the endless difficulties and disagreements, and gave up the cause as hopeless. The optimistic left the council in the belief, however, that at least a beginning had been made and that future councils would complete the work so badly needed by the Church. The only person who could really rejoice was Martin V, for his power had suffered comparatively little at the hands of the council which had been summoned in such high hopes.

CHAPTER XVI

THE COUNCIL OF BASEL: I. THE CONFLICT OF POPE AND COUNCIL

III. *Pontificate of Martin V*

MARTIN V left Constance on 16th May, 1418, a free Pontiff, with the full allegiance of Western Christendom assured. He resolved to maintain his liberty of action and his prerogatives as Papal monarch by returning to Rome, the historical capital of Christendom. His route took him to Geneva, where he tarried three months, had the satisfaction of receiving the allegiance of the citizens of Avignon, and learned of the uprising in Bohemia in consequence of the death of Huss. At the end of September he journeyed slowly through Savoy to Turin, thence to Milan, Brescia, Mantua, and finally entered Florence on 26th February, 1419, where the unsettled condition of the States of the Church compelled him to spend nearly two years. There the deposed Pontiff John XXIII, whose freedom had been purchased for 38,500 Rhenish ducats raised by the loyal Florentines, came in poverty and humility, showing more dignity in adversity than he had done in prosperity, to throw himself at the feet of Martin V. He was kindly received, and given a cardinal's hat, but died six months later so poor that his legacies were scarcely paid. A costly tomb, sculptured by the great Donatello at the expense of Cosmo de Medici, was erected for him in the Baptistery and bears this inscription: "The body of Baldassare Cossa, John XXIII, once Pope, is buried here." Gregorovius described the tomb as "the monument of an important epoch in the life of nations, the monument of the Great Schism and also the last grave of a Pope out of Rome".[1]

The Babylonian Captivity and the Great Western Schism had left Italy in a state of anarchy and turmoil. The Duke of Milan was attempting to assert his supremacy in Lombardy.

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[1] Gregorovius, *Grabmäler*, 84.

Venice had gained a foothold on the mainland and was a powerful rival of Milan for the mastery of northern Italy. Naples was ruled by Joanna II, whose incompetency and licentiousness had thrown her kingdom into a distracted state. Braccio, a Perugian nobleman, embraced the calling of a condottiere, and was made governor of Bologna by John XXIII. In 1416 he sold the Bolognese their liberty, hired soldiers on all sides, and made himself the master of his native city, Perugia. Then he fell upon the States of the Church and in 1417 took Rome. Martin V wisely saw that little could be done by force and consequently resorted to diplomacy as the best means of recovering possession of the Eternal City and the Patrimony of Peter. Hence in 1418 he came to an understanding with Joanna, whose general, Sforza, had meanwhile taken Rome, by which the Pope gave his sanction to her coronation in 1419 and she in turn ordered Sforza to evacuate Rome. Through the mediation of the Florentines in 1420 Martin succeeded in coming to terms with Braccio, who gave up his conquests of the Papal States, and persuaded Bologna to submit to the Pope. The way was now open to enter Rome.

On 9th September, 1420 Martin V left Florence, reached his native city on 28th September, and made his solemn entry into Rome on the 30th enthusiastically welcomed as a deliverer. The world's capital was in a wretched, poverty-stricken, devastated condition. Decay and ruin were seen on all sides in homes, palaces, churches, streets, and bridges. The thoroughfares were full of filth and dirt, and deserted by the people, whom famine and sickness had decimated and reduced to the remnants of a glorious race. The clergy had neither food nor raiment, and were forced to sell their libraries and sacred vessels to procure the absolute necessities of life—from which the sad condition of the rest of the people may be imagined. The beautiful monuments of antiquity had been destroyed, or burned for lime, or used for the construction of palaces for the nobles. Many churches were roofless, while others had been used for goat and sheep pens. To such a condition had mighty Rome fallen that wolves from the surrounding hills actually attacked the inhabitants within the walls, invaded the Vatican Gardens, where five of these animals were slain on 5th January, 1411, and dug up the dead in the neighbouring cemetery.[1]

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[1] Gregorovius, iv, 618.

Martin V was confronted with the tremendous task of restoring everything, and he set about it with the zeal and resolution which revealed the true Roman. Undaunted by conditions, he sought first to restore order and law by suppressing the bandits and robbers, who infested the streets and roads leading to Rome and who preyed upon the merchants and pilgrims, and to revive the administration of justice. He proved himself to be a capable and judicious ruler with sufficient courage and constructive statesmanship to meet the emergency confronting him in the dilapidated city. A Papal minister of police, called *soldanus*, was appointed. Smugglers and pirates were suppressed. The streets were cleaned of refuse and stagnant pools of disease-breeding water, and the bridges were repaired. Two overseers of the street were put in charge of this necessary work.[1] The Vatican palace was made inhabitable, and special care was devoted to the neglected churches. The Pope took personal supervision of the restoration of the basilicas and the parochial churches, and ordered the cardinals to look after their titular churches. Famous artists like Gentile da Fabriano, Vittore Pisanello, Fra Angelico, and Masaccio were invited to Rome to decorate the restored sacred edifices. As Papal finances improved, he rebuilt the Palace of the Conservatores and improved the broken walls around the city. For himself he built a humble palace on the Quirinal and a strong summer castle at the ancient family seat near Palestrina. The work of destruction had been so terrible that the recovery of the Eternal City proceeded very slowly. Gradually the fourth-rate country town once more began to stand forth as the metropolitan capital of Christendom with life and property secure. Thus Martin V as a result of the unwearied care he devoted to his problem, opened a new era for Rome and justly deserved to be called " Father of his country ".[2] A Roman chronicler wrote: " In the time of Martin V a man might travel by day or night through the country, miles away from Rome, with gold in his open hand." Another biographer compares the epoch to that of Octavianus Augustus.[3]

This Pontiff not only restored the foundations of Rome but also those of the Papal monarchy in the Papal States, which the

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[1] This was the revival of the old office of *Magistri viarum*.

[2] Pastor, i, 222.

[3] Muratori, iii, 2, 866.

Schism had thrown into a state of anarchy and confusion. He restricted and defined the prerogatives of the local princes who ruled the cities. The city of Rome likewise lost its political independence, although the municipal constitution was not altered. All these changes show what an able and energetic head of the Church could accomplish in the midst of the most discouraging circumstances. The cities within the confines of the Papal States gradually submitted one by one until his sway was complete and recognized on all sides.[1] Martin V very shrewdly strengthened his temporal power in central Italy by important family alliances. He was guilty of the old sin of nepotism and appointed his relatives right and left to lucrative positions in the Church. Joanna II of Naples was persuaded to invest two brothers with important Neapolitan fiefs. Giordano Colonna was created Duke of Amalfi and Venosa and Prince of Salerno; while Lorenzo became Count of Alba, and his sons were well provided for, one of them being made a cardinal. In the midst of a powerful and quarrelsome Roman aristocracy, whose castles were like so many nests of robbers, and who cared little for the Papal monarchy, Martin V naturally depended upon his relatives for both financial and military support, and believed that he could increase his own power by increasing theirs.[2]

Save for a few feeble efforts, Martin V paid no attention to the reforms promised at Constance. Pastor excuses him on the ground that he was too busy improving and governing Rome and the Papal States. Consequently the old abuses of the Papal court continued and little heed was given to enforcing the inadequate measures enacted by the council. The Pope clung tenaciously to his lofty conceptions of Papal absolutism. He revealed great zeal in crushing heretics like the Fratricelli, sought to increase devotion to the sacred relics in Rome, proclaimed a great jubilee in 1423, encouraged the saintly preacher of penance, St Bernardine, to labour in Rome, and lived a simple pious life.

After establishing his power firmly in Italy, Martin V turned his attention to the restoration of Papal supremacy in Europe. Benedict XIII, the only pretender of the period of the Schism still active, had thundered out anew the sentence of excommunication against Martin V for having usurped the Roman

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[1] Pastor, i, 224.

[2] Ib., 226–8.

See, and against the Romans for having received him. The King of Aragon, provoked at the new Pope's refusal to permit him to dispose of all vacant benefices and to share the Papal revenues, was secretly supporting the deposed Papal claimant. The situation was further complicated by the fact that, since Joanna II had no heirs, both Alfonso of Aragon, and Louis of Anjou had an eye on her throne. The Queen, no doubt advised by the Pope, repudiated Alfonso and recognized Louis as the rightful successor to her kingdom. Meanwhile, Benedict XIII died in 1422, and was immediately succeeded by the anti-Pope Clement VIII, who of course received the support of Alfonso of Aragon. As a result of his conduct in keeping the schism alive, Martin V in 1426 summoned the King of Aragon to appear before him within 100 days on pain of excommunication. The firmness of Martin V led to a reconciliation with Alfonso, who persuaded Clement VIII to resign and thus removed all danger of perpetuating the schism.[1] The Pope was particularly anxious to secure the abolition of anti-Papal legislation in England and France, enacted in consequence of the confusions of the schismatic period. In France he was successful for in February, 1425, the young King Charles VII published an edict by which the rights of the Pope were completely restored.[2] He likewise zealously championed the rights of the Church against the governments of Portugal, Poland, Scotland, Venice, and Florence.[3] Apparently Martin V took great pains to make the college of cardinals, as well as the Papal court, thoroughly international by appointing to prominent places representatives from all the European nations.[4]

112. *Council of Pavia-Siena*

The Council of Constance by the decree *Frequens* had provided for the holding of a universal council in 1423, and then periodically thereafter. The purpose of this revolutionary measure was to substitute constitutional for arbitrary monarchical government of the Church. Martin V was unalterably opposed to any such innovation, for he firmly believed that the unity of the Church could be completed only by the restoration of absolute Pontifical power. Consequently he aimed to crush both the theory of the conciliar government of the Church, and every effort to put it into practical operation.[1] He saw with great vividness that the radical ideas held in respect to the constitution of the Church threatened the very foundations of Papal prerogatives, hence he was determined to prevent their realization. The prolonged dispute as to whether the Pope or the council should have the first place in the Church, and the dictatorial attitude of the councils of Pisa and Constance, filled him with distrust and disgust at the very name of a general council.[2] But the conciliar theory still had many warm supporters in Europe, particularly in the University of Paris, who were determined to carry out the provisions of the decree *Frequens*. Martin V could not very well openly oppose the act of Constance, since he himself on 19th April, 1418, had designated Pavia as the place for the next council in 1423 and the University of Paris had reminded him in 1422 of the necessity of issuing the summons, hence he called Christendom to convene in a general council at Pavia in April, 1423. The conservative party feared the consequences of such a body, after the experiences at Constance, and placarded Rome threatening him in case he dared to enforce the decree.

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[1] Bower, *Hist. of the Popes*, iii, 207–16.

[2] Creighton, ii, 24.

[3] Raynaldus, 1427, n. 19; 1429, n. 15, etc.

[4] Pastor, i, 242, gives a full account of the international character of the curia.

The conditions in Christendom were very unfavourable for such an assembly. England and France were engaged in a bloody war; Germany was laid waste by the Hussites; and Spain was busy driving back the Moors. The failure of the Council of Constance really to reform the Church had so discouraged the liberal party that they expected nothing from an Italian council under the power of Martin V. As a result, the attendance from beyond the Alps was very scanty, and so few were present from Italy that recruits had to be drummed up before the council could be opened for business on 23rd April. It was evident that the Pope was using his influence against the success of the council. The opening formalities were scarcely at an end before the outbreak of the plague occasioned its transfer to Siena, where on 2nd July, it reconvened.

The organization of the council first occupied the attention of the members, and it was decided to follow Constance in voting by nations. All prelates, abbots, university graduates in orders, rectors, ambassadors of kings, barons, and universities were granted the right to vote. Each nation was to judge what other ecclesiastics were to be given a voice. Each nation was to choose its president monthly and he, together with a committee, was to be given power to recommend the order of business in accordance with the will of the majority. Such measures as were recommended by a majority of the nations acting separately were to be brought before the whole council for ratification. Meanwhile the council repeatedly urged Martin V to attend, and the city of Siena granted him a safe-conduct according to his own terms, but he only sent four presidents to rule over it in his name. These Papal representatives used every effort to undermine the influence of the council, since it was believed that the members were actuated by the same motives and ideas which had sought to curtail Papal prerogatives at the Council of Constance. Letters from Rome sought by promises of promotion to influence neutral prelates.

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[1] John of Ragusa, *Mon. Concil. gen. saec.*, xv, 1, 66.
[2] Pastor, i, 239.

The reform party saw that something must be done or all would be lost. Hence a session of the council was held on 6th November, in which it was declared that the work of reformation must begin with the purification of the faith. Consequently the errors of Wiclif and Huss were condemned, the partisans of the schismatic Pope, Benedict XIII, were denounced; the reunion of the Roman and Greek Churches was advised; and all Christians were exhorted to root out heresy wherever found. The liberals next urged that the work of reformation should be taken up where it had been dropped at Constance. The French prelates presented a programme of reforms in accordance with the discussions of the former council. The Papal party was determined to prevent the consideration of these proposed reforms, and, since but two cardinals and twenty-five higher prelates were present at this session, found it easy to obstruct every move for constructive legislation. By organizing their forces within each nation so as to prevent all possibility of unanimous action, and by throwing the machinery of the nations into confusion through disputed elections of the presidents, the conservative party effectually blocked the movement for reform. National jealousies were further aroused by bringing up the question of the place for the next general council to be summoned in seven years. The French insisted upon a place in France, and that aroused the opposition of the representatives of Germany and England. Finally Basel was selected by compromise as a suitable place. In the face of opposition from Martin V and the conservatives in the council, the reformers realized the impossibility of doing anything further, so finally submitted to the dissolution of the council on 7th March, 1424, by the Papal legates.[1]

To quiet the criticism of the liberal party in the Church, Martin V thought it wise to make some promises of reform. Hence he appointed two cardinals to act as commissioners in gathering evidence of the need of reform in the Papal curia. On the strength of their report he issued a constitution on 16th May, 1425 [2]:—

1. The cardinals were forbidden to act as protectors of the interests of secular rulers at the Papal court; they were ordered to live near their titular churches, which were to be restored by them, and to conduct suitable divine service; and they were commanded not to appear in the streets with a larger retinue than twenty attendants.
2. The duties of the protonotaries and abbreviators of the Papal chancery were defined and regulated.
3. Archbishops, bishops, and abbots were ordered to observe strict residence, and to hold provincial synods thrice yearly for the correction of local abuses. The ordinaries were enjoined to live model lives and were forbidden to levy oppressive financial exactions. Many of their rights of reservation were withdrawn.

This measure was good so far as it went, but it was far from sufficient, and apparently was not enforced. Free from conciliar restraint and interference for seven years, Martin V had an opportunity such as had come to but few Popes to assume the leadership in giving the Church a complete reformation from top to bottom. By so doing he could both have satisfied the demands of the best men in the Church and strengthened his own office. Had that been done, the bitter conflict with the Council of Basel would have been averted and the dire results of the Protestant Revolt to the old Church might have been escaped. But Martin V had little interest in reformation, lacked the vision of a great constructive ecclesiastical statesman, and consequently missed the grand chance to immortalize his name.

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[1] Hardium, viii, 1013–1028; Mansi, xxviii, 1057–1084.

[2] Döllinger, *Beiträge*, ii, 335, gives the document. C. Haller, *Quellen und Forsch.*, viii, 249.

The old abuses continued, new ones appeared, the venality of the curia went unchecked, and the former complaints about extortion and oppression began afresh. In 1420 an envoy of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order in Prussia wrote: "Dear Grand Master: You must send money, for here at the court all friendship ends with the last penny." In another letter the writer said that it was impossible to describe all the devices used in Rome to get money—that gold was the only friend and the only means of getting business done. A report of 1430 ran: "Greed reigns supreme in the Roman court, and day by day finds new devices and artifices for extorting money from Germany, under pretext of ecclesiastical fees. Hence much outcry, complaining, and heart-burnings among scholars and courtiers; also many questions in regard to the Papacy will arise, or else obedience will ultimately be entirely renounced, to escape from these outrageous exactions of the Italians; and the latter course would be, as I perceive, acceptable to many countries."[1] Germans, Swiss, Poles, French, and English of that day all contributed similar testimony.[2] In 1425 an embassy from the King of England appeared before Martin V to urge him to open the Council of Basel within a year and appear there in person with all his cardinals for the purpose of undertaking the work of reformation. An English prelate said bluntly to the Pope: "If the abuses of the Church are not removed by your holiness, the necessary reforms will be taken in hand by the secular powers."[3] The cardinals were curbed by the Pope only so far as not to be held in restraint by them himself. They stammered like children in his presence. Bishops were humbled and their plans for national Churches broken up. Only the Romans, who shared in the gains of the Papal See, were satisfied with the condition of affairs. Nothing is more apparent than that Martin V completely disappointed the expectations of the liberal party in the Church. The work of reform had to be postponed to the next universal council held at Basel.

[1] Voigt, *Stimmen*, 94, 98, 113, 120, 126, 144, 156, 170, 173.

[2] Pastor, i, 241; Gieseler, iii, 239–49.

[3] Brown, *Fascicul*, i, 19–21.

133. *Calling of Council of Basel; Election of Eugenius IV*

The complete failure of the council of Pavia and Siena made the liberal party in the Church impatient to hurry up the calling of the promised council of Basel, even though in accordance with the decree *Frequens* it was not due until 1431. The causes which operated to emphasise the necessity of an earlier summoning of the council were :—

1. The complete failure of the crusade to crush the heretical Hussites.
2. The postponement of reformation from Constance to Pavia and from Pavia to Basel.
3. The persistence of the conciliar theory, particularly in university circles, as the panacea for all the ills in the Church.[1]

In 1425 to the English representatives at Rome who urged the holding of the council within a year, Martin V answered that it was not then opportune to shorten the period decided upon at Siena. The next year French ambassadors appeared at Rome to demand the calling of a council, but the Pope turned a deaf ear to the request. On 8th November, 1430, the walls of the Papal palace, and other public places in Rome, were placarded with bills proclaiming the necessity of a council; reminding the Pope of his duty to call it; threatening that the temporal princes would summon it, if he refused; declaring that those cardinals who resisted the call would be deposed for heresy; and even menacing the Pope with revolution and deposition.[2] Although the authors were unknown, the sensation caused was immense, and the friends of the council urged Martin V to heed the warning. Accordingly the Pope on 1st February, 1431, sent two bulls to Cardinal Cesarini, who had been sent as legate to supervise the new crusade against the Hussites, the first of which authorized him to open the Council of Basel and preside over it; and the second empowered him, in case of necessity, to transfer the council to another city.[3] The second bull clearly shows the Pope's intentions towards the council, in case it attempted further encroachments upon Papal prerogatives. But Martin V, "the second founder of the Papal monarchy and the restorer of Rome," died on 20th February, leaving his successor to deal with the approaching council.[1] The bulls reached Cesarini at Nuremberg after the Pope's death.

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[1] Hergenröther, II, i, 93.

[2] *Mon. Concil.*, i, 65–66; Martène, viii, 48.

[3] Ib., 67; Pastor, i, 280.

Before proceeding to the election of a new Pontiff, the fourteen cardinals drew up and signed a capitulation, or agreement, by which the newly chosen head of the Church was obliged :—

1. To reform the Roman court "in head and members" and not to transfer it to another place without the consent of a majority of the college of cardinals.
2. To hold a general council and thoroughly reform the whole Church.
3. To follow the decrees of Constance in appointing new cardinals.
4. To respect the rights, persons, and property of the cardinals, and to turn over to them half of the revenues of the Roman Church.
5. To undertake no important measures, without their consent, in regard to the Papal States, whose vassals and officials were to swear obedience to the Sacred College.[2]

This agreement clearly shows that the cardinals had their fingers on the pulse of Europe and realized how necessary to the life and continued usefulness of the Church reformation was. Eugenius IV, chosen on 3rd March, 1431, immediately published a bull incorporating these measures and thus gave to the Church a constitution, which materially limited the temporal power of the Church and radically changed the government of the Papal States.

The new Pontiff was born in Venice in 1383 of wealthy Venetian parents and was a nephew of Gregory XII, who had made him cardinal at the age of 24. He was a tall, grave, dignified, thin man with a princely bearing and an imposing personal appearance. He belonged to the Augustinian monastery in Venice. He occupied numerous positions of honour and trust in the Church and at the Papal court. He was strictly moral, simple in his tastes, and temperate in his personal habits. He hated nepotism, was not greedy for money, and had a reputation for piety unusual among the Popes of that day. So great was his reputation that he was elected Pope on the first ballot. He inherited the failings of Martin V and suffered greatly thereby, so that his Pontificate was far from a happy one. His hasty and over-violent measures against the relatives of his predecessor incurred the ill-will of the powerful Colonna family and caused him much trouble.[1] He died in Rome in 1447.

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[1] Pastor, i, 281 ; Loserth, 501.

[2] Raynaldus, *Ann.*, 1431, n. 5–7.

114. *Opening of the Council; determination of Eugenius IV to dissolve it*

7th March, 1431, was the date set for the formal opening of the Council of Basel, but on that day only one prelate, the Abbot of Burgundy, was present. On the last day of February the abbot read before the assembled clergy of Basel the bulls constituting the council, and then solemnly announced that he was ready for conciliar business. In April the representatives of the University of Paris and a few other prelates began to arrive, and on the 11th of that month, six delegates issued a pressing call to all Christendom to hasten the attendance. John of Ragusa was sent by Cesarini to Basel on 29th April, to inform those awaiting the opening of the council that the crusade against the Hussites kept him occupied, but on 27th June Cesarini received a messenger from Eugenius IV urging him to proceed at once to Basel to open the Council, whereupon on 3rd July, he appointed John of Palomar and John of Ragusa to preside over the council in his absence as his deputies. Consequently on 23rd July the council was formally opened in the free imperial city of Basel. The scanty attendance included only three bishops, seven abbots, some doctors and a few laymen, because of the unsettled times, the unsafe roads, and the Bohemian war. The first business of the council was to increase its numbers, and to obtain some guarantee of its safety and freedom from the city and from Sigismund.

Cardinal Cesarini did not arrive until 9th September, but by that time enough recruits had been secured to begin business. Still out of the 500 present, including many doctors, not over twenty bishops could be counted. Deeply impressed with the weighty problems confronting the council, Cesarini sent forth letters urging the higher clergy to lose no time in coming to the council. In a letter to the Pope he expressed the general hope as to what the council should do, namely, that:

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[1] Creighton, ii, 167.

1. It ought to extirpate heresy and humble its enemies.
2. It should promote peace throughout Christendom among the warring countries.
3. It should reform the Church and thus restore it to its pristine power and glory.
4. It should bring about a reunion with the Greeks and inaugurate a crusade to recover the Holy Land.[1]

At the same time an envoy was sent to the Pope to acquaint him more fully how matters stood and to urge him to attend the council in person.[2] The question of voting was raised, but it was decided to postpone the settlement of that problem until the attendance was larger.

Eugenius IV, misinformed about the weakness and dangerous spirit of the council, angered at the letter to the Bohemian heretics compromising the faith of the Church, suspicious of the suggestions of a democratic organization of the council for voting, and fearful lest the council would revive the assumptions of conciliar supremacy in imitation of Constance, committed the grievous mistake of writing to Cesarini on 12th November, empowering him to dissolve the council, and to proclaim another to be held at Bologna in a year and a half. The reasons for the order were: the small attendance of the higher clergy; the unsettled conditions due to war; and the hope by this arrangement the better successfully to conclude the reunion with the Greeks, who insisted upon a council held in Italy, over which the Pope could preside in person. A Papal bull dissolving the council on these grounds was secretly drawn up on 18th December, and signed by ten cardinals.[3]

115. *Breach between the Pope and Council; Letter of Cesarini, 13th January*, 1432

Ignorant of the blow aimed at it, the council held its first public session on 14th December, with Cesarini presiding, and three bishops, fourteen abbots, and a large number of doctors, priests, and laymen in attendance. The council declared itself duly constituted, and then stated the three objects before it: (1) to extirpate heresy; (2) to purify Christendom, and (3) to reform morals. On 23rd December the Bishop of Parenzo arrived with the bull of dissolution. Immediately the council was in a turmoil of excitement and protest. In a congregation held on 29th December, the citizens of Basel appeared and denounced the bull. Fiery speeches were made in opposition to the dissolution. Finally four propositions were made to the Papal representative:—

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[1] *Mon. Concil.*, Ed. Richter, Vienna 1857–1895, i, 108.
[2] Haller, *Con. Bas.*, i, 21; Palacky, *Mon. Concil.*, ii, 32.
[3] Mansi, xxix, 564; Haller, i, 246; Pastor, i, 287.

1. That the urgent needs of Christendom would not permit the dissolution of the council.

2. That such an act would cause great scandal and offence to the Church.

3. That if this council were dissolved or prorogued, it would be idle to summon another.

4. That a general council ought to proceed against all who tried to hinder it, and if necessary call all Christian princes to its assistance.

This unexpected opposition forced the Papal representative to attempt to temporize, and he declared that if he had any bulls with him he would not publish them, but at the same time he secretly tried to persuade Cesarini to dissolve the council. The noble Cesarini was in a tight place between his obedience to the Pope and his sense of loyalty to the Church and the council. Finally it was agreed that two envoys should be sent to the Pope—one from Cesarini and one from the council. The Bishop of Parenzo fled on 8th January, 1432, but left his bulls with John of Prato, who attempted to proclaim them on 13th January, and was arrested by the council's order.[1]

The anti-Papal party, who resented the endeavour to dissolve the council, addressed an encyclical letter on 21st January to all the faithful announcing their determination "to continue in the council, and, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to labour at the task committed to it".[2] This act was undoubtedly a revolution, but in complete accord with the assertions of Constance and with the liberal party's programme, as well as with public opinion generally throughout the Church. The council was standing squarely upon the new ground taken by the Council of Constance, and was immediately backed up by the secular powers with promises of protection, so the menaces of Eugenius IV were unheeded. It was honestly believed on all sides that the worthy work of reformation would again fail if the council was dismissed without so much as an opportunity to attempt something.

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[1] *Mon. Concil.*, ii, 64.

[2] Mansi, xxix, 237–9.

Cesarini, who so clearly discerned the calamitous condition of the Church, understood the Bohemian situation, and felt the dire need of reform, was deeply moved by the Pope's short-sighted policy, and wrote him a famous letter, on 13th January, 1432, in which he frankly expressed his bitter disappointment at the Pope's conduct and stated that only honest and straight-forward policies and measures on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities could restore the shattered confidence of the Christian people. The peril of the faith, the danger of rebellion against the Papacy, and the attacks made on Eugenius IV everywhere, led him to write fearlessly. He reviewed the Bohemian situation, on which he could speak with the most convincing authority, and explained his hope of a favourable settlement through the council. In reference to reformation, he wrote: "I was driven also to come here by observing the dissoluteness and disorder of the German clergy, by which the laity are sorely irritated against the Church—so much so, that there is reason to fear that, if the clergy do not mend their ways, the laity will attack them, as the Hussites do. If there had been no general council, I should have thought it my duty as legate to summon a provincial synod for the reform of the clergy; for unless the clergy be reformed I fear that, even if the Bohemian heresy were extinguished, another would rise in its place." With these ideas in mind he went to Basel in the belief that he was carrying out the wishes of the Pope. "I did not suppose that Your Holiness wished me to dissemble or act negligently; if you had bid me do so, I would have answered that you must lay that duty on another, for I have determined never to occupy the post of a liar." Had he been in Rome when the question of the prorogation of the council was discussed, he would have argued:—

1. That so long as the Bohemians had been invited to the council, its dissolution would look like a disgraceful flight before the heretics, an approval of their errors, and a

condemnation of the "truth and justice of our own cause". "O luckless Christendom! O Catholic faith, abandoned by all!—soldiers and priests alike desert thee; no one dares stand on thy side."

2. That the disruption of the council would lose the allegiance of wavering Catholics, amongst whom already were spreading many opinions contrary to the Holy See.

3. That the responsibility for the abandonment of the council would fall upon the clergy, who would be universally assailed and abused.

4. That the Christian world in disgust would say that "the clergy is incorrigible and wishes to moulder in its abuses", that many councils were held, yet no reforms resulted, and that "we mock both God and men". Since men were expecting results from this council "the whole reproach, the whole shame and ignominy, will fall upon the Roman curia as the cause and author of these ills. Holy Father, may you never be the cause of such evils!"

5–6. That for the pacification of Christendom, ambassadors were sent to reconcile England and France, and Poland and the Teutonic Knights; the council's dismissal would defeat their valuable labours.

7. That disturbances had already broken out in Magdeburg and Passau, where the people had risen against their bishops and showed signs of following the Hussites.

8. That the Duke of Burgundy had been invited to assume the leadership against the heretical Bohemians, but the dissolution of the council would anger him and his services would be lost.

9. That many German nobles were preparing for another expedition against the Hussite movement, but if the Pope deserted them, they would turn against the Church.

10. That the council sent envoys to the neutrals on the Bohemian borders, but the break-up of the council would undo that good work and thus augment the Hussite strength.

Cesarini then proceeded in the letter to answer the Pope's objections to the council. If ill-health prevented him from going to Basel in person, then let him send a deputation of cardinals and other eminent prelates to represent him. The city was as safe as Constance had been. If the Pope feared that the council would meddle with his powers, that was all the more reason why he should endeavour to control its proceedings. " If we do not let this council alone, the laity will come and take away our temporalities," as the Jews were conquered by the Romans, and we shall lose " our lives and our souls as well ". Hence the Pope must be friendly with the council, reform his curia, and be ready to act for the good of the entire Church. If driven to extremities, the council would refuse to dissolve, and another schism would be imminent. If he attempted to dissolve the council, he would be stoned to death ; if he ran away, the council would appoint another president in his place. Hence he begged to be relieved of his commission, unless he could be assured of genuine co-operation from Rome.[1]

This letter was a most remarkable portrayal of the conditions in Europe and at Basel, and a true forecast of the future. It is a matter of deepest regret that Eugenius IV's ears were deaf to its wisdom and that the Roman court refused to accept its counsel. The Pope was too obstinate to alter his course once it was determined. He had only contempt for the council, and made no effort to understand its purposes and motives. He completely ignored the lessons of the Council of Constance, and the wily politicians at Rome only smiled at the pleadings of Cesarini, while they encouraged the head of the Church in his hostility. As a consequence the Council of Basel, standing in the footsteps of Constance, was forced in self-defence to assume an attitude of open hostility towards the Papacy, and this made a desperate struggle between the two powers inevitable.

Once again Sigismund became a decisive factor in the delicate situation. To suppress the Hussite uprising, he had favoured the calling of the council, and in July, 1431, he had taken the council under his imperial protection. But meanwhile he had his eye on the imperial crown awaiting him at Rome, and hence he did not wish to offend the Roman Pontiff. In November, 1431, he entered Italy with 2,000 knights, made a treaty with the Visconti of Milan, assumed the iron crown of Lombardy, and was on his way to Rome when he received news of the dissolution of the council by the Pope. He immediately wrote to the Fathers at Basel to stand firm and said that he was endeavouring to persuade the Pope to reconsider his decision.[1]

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[1] *Mon. Concil.*, 97 ; Aen. Syl., *Opera*, 64 ; Creighton, ii, 204–6.

Before receiving Sigismund's letter of encouragement, the council on 21st January, 1432, issued a summons to all Christendom, begging those who were coming to Basel not to take the reports of the dissolution of the council seriously, for it was highly improbable that the Pope would dare to set aside the decrees of the Council of Constance by dismissing the council which was called to extirpate heresy and to reform the Church. As a result prelates poured into Basel daily and on 3rd February, William of Bavaria arrived as Sigismund's vicegerant to give his support to the Fathers. The Dukes of Milan, Burgundy, and Savoy all wrote to offer their co-operation. A French synod at Bourges early in 1432 approved of the council's legitimacy. The University of Paris sent word that the Pope's decree to transfer the council was a suggestion of the devil. Cesarini felt duty-bound to resign as president, and the Bishop of Constance was elected to take his place. As a further sign of its independence, the council ordered a seal to be made to be stamped on its documents. It represented God sending down the Holy Ghost on the Pope and the Emperor sitting in a council surrounded by cardinals, prelates, and doctors, and bore the words "Seal of the Holy Universal Council of Basel representing the Universal Church".

In the minds of the Fathers of the council the issue was clearly defined: Papal absolutism *versus* conciliar supremacy. The ablest defender of the conciliar party was Nicholas of Cusa (1401–64), who was a delegate at Basel from Coblenz on the Rhine, and wrote a book entitled *De concordantia catholica* in which he maintained the supremacy of councils over Popes, and assailed the genuineness of the False Decretals and the Donation of Constantine. He argued that infallibility had been bestowed upon the whole Church and could be transferred by it to an œcumenical council. The Pope is merely one member of the whole Church, hence he cannot be infallible. The canons of a general council are obligatory on all alike, priest and layman, without exception. The decrees of the Pope, on the other hand, are valid only on condition that they are universally accepted. The council is superior to the Pope and has the right to depose him, not only for heresy, but for any fault. The greatest Popes recognized their authority as coming from the general councils.

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[1] Sigismund was not crowned as emperor until 31st May, 1433.

John of Turrecremata (1388–1468) a Dominican who had been present at the Council of Constance and also sat in the Council of Basel, was the ablest defender of Papal power in his book *Summa de ecclesia et ejus auctoritate*—a work which was recognized by the Papal party for years. The Archbishop of Tarento also made a very powerful speech in the Pope's behalf.[1]

John of Segovia (b. 1400), a professor of theology at Salamanca, reached Basel in 1433, and the next year wrote an opinion on the Papal bull of 15th February, 1434, which named legates to preside over the council; asserted the superiority of the Pope or his representative, the president, over the council; and his unlimited power to regulate and guide the council in its acts. John asserted that such an assumption of supremacy over the council was not to be tolerated, because it contradicted the sovereign authority of the Church represented in a universal council. The council was the highest authority on earth, and could subject the Pope to its will. The Pope was only the first servant of the council and the noblest member of the body of Christ. The Church in the council represented the mystical body of Christ, who was the real head of the Church. In the early councils emperors often presided, and the attempt of the Pope at usurpation of leadership must be opposed.[2]

Of the second session, 15th February, 1432, it was recorded: "The very holy council of Basel, representing the Church Militant, legitimately assembled in the name of the Holy Ghost for the glory of God, the extirpation of heresies and errors, the reformation of the Church, in its head and members, the pacification of Christian princes, declare, define, and ordain that which follows"[3]:

1. That this council is duly and legally assembled in Basel in accordance with the acts of Constance and Siena, and with the Papal bulls.

2. That its authority rests upon two decrees passed at Constance: (*a*) That "a general council holds its power

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[1] Mansi, xxix, 482–92. [2] Haller, *Con. Basil.*, i, 20–23; Harduin, ix, 1081.
[3] Creighton, ii, 211.

immediately from Christ, and that all persons of every rank, even the Papal, are bound to obey it in matters pertaining to the faith, the extirpation of heresy, and the reformation of the Church in head and members". (*b*) That any one, even the Pope, who refused to obey its decrees may be punished as the council sees fit.

3. That the council could not be transferred against its will, nor dissolved, without the council's consent; and that all proceedings against its members by the Pope were null and void.

Thus the opposition to Papal absolutism, which started in the period of the schism, found its climax in the Council of Basel. Pisa had merely aided the cardinals in attempting to restore unity to the Church. Constance had asserted its supremacy against three Papal pretenders. But the Council of Basel dared to proclaim its authority over a legitimate, and universally recognized Pope. That was sheer revolution by the ecclesiastical aristocracy against the Papal monarchy. The revolt was upheld by the kings of France and England, the Emperor, other minor princes, the universities, and the clergy of these lands. Besides six cardinals fortified the position of the council by their presence. The fate of the Church hung on the outcome of the issues involved. All the possibilities of the Protestant Revolt were potentially present in the conflict. Envoys were once more sent over Christendom to win sympathy and support for the council's position.

116. *Organization of the Council by Committees*

Now that the council had declared its independence of and superiority to the Pope, it proceeded to complete its organization for business. Constance had very clearly revealed the dangers that might result in case the method of that body should be followed. Therefore, acting on the advice of Cesarini, a committee of twelve was appointed to nominate members for four distinct committees of twenty members each as follows: (1) committee on faith; (2) committee on reformation; (3) committee on unity and peace; and (4) committee on general business. These committees were created to prepare business for the general sessions of the council. In order to prevent the control of the council by any clique or faction, the committees were reconstituted every four months, care being taken to retain four of the old members so as not to break up the continuity of the business before the council, but the same men could not be reappointed twice. The nominating committee of twelve members, renewed monthly, acted as a medium for reporting measures to the council, and assigned new arrivals to the various committees. Clergy of every rank from priest to bishop were represented on each committee. This committee also decided the allotment of business to the several committees, received reports from them, and submitted them to a general congregation of the whole council. Another small committee of four members was appointed, one by each of the larger committees, to assume formal charge of the council's business. All the communications of the council passed through the hands of this little body, and the council's seal was in their hands. If they were dissatisfied with the contents of a communication, they returned it together with their objections to the appropriate committee for revision. Each committee had a separate hall for its sessions. When all the committees agreed upon a measure, it was then submitted to a public session of the council for ratification. Secrecy in the discussion and conduct of business was forbidden, and members of one committee were encouraged to discuss their affairs with those of other committees. Each committee elected its own president and could only undertake the business laid before it by him in the sessions held thrice weekly. In the general congregation, three committees had to approve a measure before it was carried before the council in general session in the cathedral for final adoption. Every precaution was taken to ensure a free and full discussion and practical unanimity before any question was finally settled. This system, which imposed a liberal oligarchy on the Church, and which was designed to reduce to a minimum national and political conflicts and ambitions was for that day remarkably democratic in its spirit and methods.[1] The first committees were appointed the last day of February, 1432.

In the organization of the council it was decided on 26th September, 1432, that the lower ranks of the clergy should have seats and votes. Thus the council was to be fully representative of the Church on a very democratic basis. Hence all persons who satisfied the scrutineers were incorporated as members, and took an equal part in the proceedings. It was not long, under this method of voting, until the representatives of the higher clergy were in a hopeless minority in the council. The Pope in 1436 declared that never more than 150 prelates assembled at Basel, and, at the time he wrote, scarcely twenty-five.[1]

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[1] Mansi, xxix, 377; Hartzheim, v, 788; Creighton, ii, 211.

117. *Surrender of Eugenius IV*

With its prerogatives clearly stated, supported by European public opinion, encouraged in its course by Sigismund, and now organized for business, the council held its third general session on 29th April, 1432, in which it called upon Eugenius IV to revoke his bull of dissolution and summoned him and his college of cardinals to appear at Basel within three months, or at least to send personal representatives, on threat of judicial proceedings. The Pope and the council were now in open conflict. All prelates who opposed the Pope flocked to Basel, and some of the cardinals secretly left Rome.[2] The council decreed in June that if a vacancy occurred in the Papacy, the new election must be held in Basel. At the same time, to weaken the Pope, a legate was appointed by the council for Avignon and Venaissin on the excuse that the council thought it right to do so since the people were dissatisfied with the Papal governor. Papal envoys sought to re-win Sigismund, who was still in Italy at Siena, and thus weaken the council's support, but to offset such an endeavour the council after reasserting its supremacy over the Pope on 6th September, in its sixth public session, accused the Pope and the cardinals of contumacy, for not answering the summons, and demanded that sentence be passed on them. The Papal envoys, who arrived on 22nd August to defend the course of the Pope, pleaded for a prolongation of the term, which was granted until February, 1433, and Cesarini, once more resumed the presidency of the council. Hearing a rumour that Eugenius intended to excommunicate the Emperor, Sigismund, the council took him under its protection and pronounced all Papal proceedings against him null and void.

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[1] Raynaldus, 1436, § 8, 9; Richter, *Die Org. und Geschäftsordnung des Basler Concils*, Leipzig, 1877.

[2] Creighton, ii, 222.

Eugenius IV, deserted on all sides and defeated in his plans by the council, at last had to acknowledge his defeat. Had he persisted, another schism might have resulted. First the Pope attempted to negotiate and compromise with the council, but finding it obstinate, he surrendered and issued a bull announcing his willingness to recognize the council at Basel and on 1st March sent four legates to represent him there.[1] Before their arrival, however, the council on 27th April, 1433, decreed:

1. That a general council should be held every ten years.
2. That the council might assemble of its own accord at the expiration of the period.
3. That a Pope who tried to impede or prorogue a council should be suspended and deprived of his office.
4. That the Council of Basel could not be dissolved or transferred without the consent of two-thirds of each committee and the subsequent approbation of two-thirds of a general congregation.
5. That cardinals henceforth were to take oath before entering a conclave that whoever was elected Pope would obey the decrees of Constance.
6. That all prelates should publish these decrees in their dioceses and chapters so as to give as wide publicity to them as possible.

Thus the Council of Basel followed Constance in its efforts to give the Church a new constitution, which created a parliamentary monarchy with the sovereign power located in the hands of a general council representing all Christendom. This innovation, for it undoubtedly was a revolution in the government of the Church, was simply a reflection of the rise of the parliamentary system which was making itself felt in European political science. No doubt it would have been much better for Western Christendom had the new principle been put into permanent operation at that time, for many of the future ills which befell the Church might have been avoided. A genuine reformation might have been more easily realized; the Protestant Revolt might have been unknown; the reunion of the Greek Church might have been more readily brought about; heresy might have been eliminated; the whole government of the Church might have been democratized; and the Church might have played a much greater part in the civilization and progress of Europe than it has.

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[1] Haller, i, 251. Cf. Ib., 253, 324–31.

When the Papal legates arrived to take charge of the council in the Pope's name,[1] Cesarini answered that he was the officer in charge of the council and must obey its will. In congregation on 13th June, the council also repudiated the authority of the legates on the ground that their master was bound to obey the council's will. It was apparent that the purpose of the council was to reduce the Pope to the position of its chief official. Six cardinals had deserted the Pope to join the council. Many of the curial officials began to grow luke-warm in their allegiance to the head of the Church, and began to act as if they realized that their own best interests would be better served in Basel than in Rome. Indeed it was with great difficulty that the Pontiff checked a general stampede for the northern centre of ecclesiastical power. Amidst these difficulties Eugenius IV made haste to pacify Sigismund by the formation of a new alliance on 7th April, 1433, and crowned him emperor on 9th May following.[2] From this time on Sigismund's supreme object was to effect a reconciliation between the council and the Pope. He had little interest in the constitutional questions involved and laboured with all his might to avert the outbreak of a new schism. He succeeded in inducing the council to extend for sixty days the period within which the Pope must without reservation withdraw his bull of dissolution on penalty of suspension from office. But every step towards reconciliation only threw into stronger relief the fact that the council, on the one hand, was bent on making good its claim to superiority over the Pope, and, on the other hand, that Eugenius was determined to suffer no diminution of Papal autocracy.[3] Europe meanwhile grew tired of the conflict over abstract constitutional questions between the Pope and the council to the neglect of the settlement of the more practical questions for which the council had been called, and also impatient of the time consumed without results. Hence Sigismund hurried northward, reached Basel on 11th October, 1433, and asked the council to deal leniently with the Pope for the sake of the peace of the Church and the avoidance of a schism. After a prolonged debate, in which all the points at issue were thoroughly reviewed, a further term of ninety days was granted to the Pope, within which he was to revoke everything which could be construed as derogatory or prejudicial to the council.

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[1] Creighton, ii, 223.

[2] Raynaldus, 433.

[3] See Haller, i, 65–8, where the letter of Ulrich Stoeckel of 14th July, 1433, is given.

Sigismund[1] now sought to divert the attention of the council by urging the consideration of the problem of reformation. The only reform undertaken thus far was the enactment of a decree on 13th July, 1433, abolishing all reservations and provisions, except in the Papal States, and stating that elections should be made only by those to whom the right belonged without the payment of dues to the Pope, for confirmation. This measure was intended to curtail the Papal revenues and thus bring him to submission. In answer to the Emperor's request, the council passed another decree on 26th November reviving the synodal system throughout the Church. This act was intended to extend to the whole Church the conciliar system and thus enable bishops to put down heresy, remedy scandals, and make needed reforms, under the guidance of general councils. It was not difficult to create machinery to deal with abuses; it was quite a different thing to deal directly with the abuses themselves.

Finally, on 30th January, 1434, envoys from Eugenius IV arrived to announce that he had at last surrendered unconditionally. They brought the bull *Decernimus* dated 14th December, 1433, revoking all previous bulls against the council, acknowledging the legitimacy of the council from the beginning, and declaring the Pope's complete adhesion to it.[2] Sigismund rejoiced at the success of his mediatorial policy; and all parties in the council were relieved when on 3rd February, in the sixteenth session the council voted that the Pope had completely satisfied its demands.[3] Meanwhile Eugenius IV was beset by desperate enemies in Italy and Rome, who incited the fickle Romans to rebellion and forced the Pope to flee to Florence 23rd June, 1434. Thus the anti-Papal party was victorious both at Basel and at Rome, and Eugenius IV baffled and humiliated by the council, remained in exile until 1443. The council was now at the summit of its power, and was generally recognized as the supreme authority in Christendom. It had compelled the Pope to accept without reserve the conciliar principle for which it laboured. With its ascendancy firmly established, it was ready to proceed to settle the important questions for which it was called, namely, the pacification of the Bohemians, the reformation of the Church from top to bottom, and the reunion of the Greek with the Latin Church.[1]

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[1] So few Germans were in attendance at the council that Sigismund in December, 1433, wrote to all the German bishops either to present themselves or else send their representatives. Haller, i, 75.

[2] Mansi, xxix, 78.

[3] Cf. Pastor, i, 288; Hergenröther-Kirsch, ii, 919; Funk, 374; Haller, i, 76–80.

[1] It should be remembered that Basel, like Constance, experienced an era of unusual prosperity as a result of this great international Council. New houses and bridges were built and new streets opened. In 1433 the hotel list included 17 new ones. Business men from all parts of Europe opened shops. Money-changers, bankers, and jewellers did a thriving business. The flourishing paper mills made Basel the centre of the printing industry. The most flourishing period was 1433–7. After the Council of Basel there followed a period of material, political, and religious decline. Geering, 268–336. A discussion of the values of gold and silver coins is found on p. xxiii.

CHAPTER XVII

THE COUNCIL OF BASEL: II. THE HUSSITES

118. *The necessity of suppressing the Bohemian heretics*

THE Council of Constance had burned John Huss and Jerome of Prague at the stake, and condemned their teachings, but had failed to crush the Hussite heresy or to pacify Bohemia. The Bohemian Diet on 1st September, 1415, had addressed a vigorous protest against these acts to the council. One of the results of the council's course was a letter signed by 452 Bohemian nobles, and addressed to the council condemning the death of Huss and Jerome, but affirming themselves to be good Christians. Sigismund's actions drew down upon his head a shower of vituperation and hatred for his treachery. The Bohemians entered a solemn compact that for six years they would maintain the doctrines of Huss, especially that of giving the laity the chalice, or cup. Hence in derision they were dubbed "Calixtines", from *calix* and "Utraquists", from the phrase, *sub utraque specie*. In March, 1417, the University of Prague declared that the laity should have the cup. The act was reported to the council, but no attention was paid to it. Meanwhile the followers of Huss were organizing themselves into a powerful and dangerous religio-political party for the purpose of obtaining their rights.

The necessity of suppressing the Bohemian disaffection was recognized on all sides. The Council of Constance ordered Sigismund, and his brother, the lazy King of Bohemia, to crush the Bohemians by force, but they feared the consequences and so did nothing. Martin V after his election threatened to declare a holy crusade against the Bohemians, and thus hand the kingdom over to any prince who would conquer it. A Papal bull to that effect was actually launched against the Hussites. Sigismund in alarm urged Wenzel to act; and Wenzel, in 1418, ordered all the churches in Prague except two, to be turned over to the Catholics. Hence multitudes of the Utraquists met in the open air on the neighbouring hill-tops, which were renamed Mt. Tabor, Mt. Horeb, etc. On 22nd July, 1419, at a vast meeting of 40,000 of the heretics, the Communion in both kinds was administered to both adults and children by priests in civilian dress, from wooden bowls, and without previous confession as the Church required. On the following Sunday, 30th July, a mob led by John Sulau, a former monk, took possession of the church of St Stephen, where their own rites were celebrated, and then surrounded the city hall and demanded the release of certain persons imprisoned there as heretics. Some person from within the building threw a stone out of a window and knocked the chalice out of the hands of the leader, John. The furious crowd then broke into the city hall, slew the burgomaster, and threw others out of the window. This was the beginning of one of the most savage, most cruel, and bloodiest religious wars Europe had yet witnessed. The Utraquists were led by John Husinetz and John Ziska (ziska = the one-eyed), a fore-runner of Cromwell, pious, eloquent, and possessed of remarkable generalship.

119. *Failure of the military efforts to crush the Bohemians*

Wenzel, enraged at these deeds of violence, threatened death to all Hussites, particularly their priests, but he died of apoplexy on 16th August, and had to be buried at night to prevent vengeance on his dead body. The responsibility of pacifying or crushing the rebellious Hussites now devolved upon Sigismund. Confronted by a threatened invasion of the Turks, he deemed it wise to adopt a conciliatory policy. He tried compromise, delay, hedge—anything to avoid war—in order that he might have time to raise an army. Finally on 17th March, 1420, Sigismund dropped his mask and declared war against the Bohemian rebels and allowed the Papal legate to proclaim a holy crusade against the heretics. At Breslau twenty-three Hussites were beheaded, at the news of which Prague revolted and all Bohemia began to arm against the hated emperor, and united to drive him from power. The religious fanatics destroyed churches and monasteries on all sides. The lands of the orthodox were seized and their houses burned down. The conflict was one of conscience, country, and liberty against orthodoxy, Papal power, and imperial authority. Sigismund entered Bohemia with an army of 80,000 soldiers drawn from all parts of his empire, but after a year's warfare marked by the utmost savagery, massacre, and pillage, he was forced to leave Bohemia in defeat. The victorious Utraquists had gained a signal triumph over the Papacy and the Empire. It remained to be seen whether they were sufficiently wise to utilize the fruits of victory to secure both political and ecclesiastical independence.

120. *The Four Articles of Prague and internal dissentions*

During a lull in the war the people of Prague had sent to Sigismund in 1420, the famous Four Articles of Prague, which formed the charter of the Hussite creed :

1. Ministers should be free to preach and the laity free to read the Scriptures.
2. Laity should receive Communion in both kinds.
3. The clergy should be free from the sins of greed and graft, live in apostolic poverty, and abstain from secular affairs.
4. All open sins and abuses in every rank of life should be repressed by the recognition of Christianity as the supreme regenerating and regulating power in society.

These articles form the most important document of the Hussite period, and clearly show how widely apart were the Roman Church and the heretics. Sigismund, under the influence of the Papal legates, rejected the articles. After forcing the Emperor to withdraw from Bohemia, the Utraquists attempted to force all the people to accept the Four Articles. Even the Archbishop of Prague, Conrad, gave his approval to them on 21st April, 1421. The Diet of Caslau held in June adopted the articles officially for Bohemia, deposed Sigismund as the ruler of the country, appointed a committee of twenty to rule Bohemia until a king could be elected, and ordered the calling of a synod of the clergy to reorganize the Church. Sigismund's ambassadors offered to compromise, but were given a scant hearing. The revolution now spread to Moravia, and it looked very much as if this group of Roman Catholic Slavs might withdraw from the Church and set up an independent organization.

The unity of the victorious Bohemians was gravely threatened at this juncture by serious internal dangers. Divergencies of opinion began to emerge. The division between the conservatives and liberals became more pronounced and soon the following discordant parties appeared:

1. The conservatives, called by the various names, Utraquists, Calixtines, and Pragers, who were essentially orthodox in their beliefs and rites, but practised Communion in both kinds, and demanded reforms in accordance with the Bible.

2. The moderate radicals, or Taborites, led by John Ziska, who wished to throw off German rule, to do away with Roman priests and nuns, and believed in fighting for these rights. They differed from the conservatives more in method than in belief.

3. The extreme Taborites, who repudiated all ecclesiastical authority, asserted that the Bible and conscience were a sufficient guide for the individual, rejected transubstantiation, purgatory, relics, saint-worship, and images; abolished Church feasts; and affirmed the universality of the priesthood.

4. The Millennarians, who held that the millennium had already begun, that Christ would soon appear to rule the earth for a thousand years, that God existed only in the hearts of the believers, and that the devil controlled the souls of the wicked. In other respects they agreed with the extreme Taborites.

5. The Adamites, a small sect on an island in the Nezarka river, who in addition to the views of the extreme Taborites gave themselves up to a life of communism which soon degenerated into disgusting excesses. In imitation of Adam and Eve they went about naked and repudiated all social conventions such as the marriage tie and family relationships.

These various parties soon began to denounce, hate, and kill each other. The Utraquists and the Taborites led by Ziska, who posed as the champions of orthodoxy, united to crush the extreme sectaries. In one day Ziska burned fifty men and women, who entered the flames joyfully shouting: "To-day we will reign with Christ." The whole body of Adamites was exterminated. The chief opponent of transubstantiation, Martin Hauska, perished at the stake as a heretic in Prague.

Meanwhile Sigismund had reorganized his forces, and by December, 1421, he again entered Bohemia with 90,000 men to crush the revolt. The impending danger at once united all the factions that had been killing each other, under the efficient leadership of Ziska, whose modern methods of warfare such as strict discipline, the employment of artillery, and protection to his flanks, spread terror among the imperial troops and they fled at the very name of Ziska. At Kuttenberg on 6th January, 1422, Sigismund was overwhelmingly defeated, lost 12,000 men, and a second time retreated in disgrace to Germany. Free once more from foreign domination, the old disputes and rivalries reappeared and for a time civil war again embroiled the land. The Bohemians now began to dream of a Slavic state and a Slavic Church by uniting Poland and Moravia with Bohemia, but the scheme came to naught, largely through the influential interference of Martin V.

Ziska died in 1424, and the "Orphans", as his followers called themselves, recognized Prokop the Great, an able priest of noble birth, as his successor. He proved to be an excellent general and an able statesman. From 1426 to 1429 he invaded Saxony, Austria, and Silesia, and everywhere defeated the imperial forces. These victories rendered vain all hope of defeating the Hussites by arms and caused the German princes to desire peace. Many Hussites, particularly the Utraquist priests, were also in favour of peace. All Europe was discussing the Hussite wars and the religious principles involved, and one of the primary causes in calling the Council of Basel was to solve that perplexing problem. On 8th November, 1430, Martin V found the following startling document attached to the door of the Papal palace :—

"Whereas it is notorious to all Christendom, that since the council of Constance an untold number of Christians have wandered from the faith by means of the Hussites, and members have been lopped off from the body of the Church Militant" a general council must be called to extirpate the Bohemian heresy.[1] Hence Cardinal Cesarini was sent north on 11th January, 1431, to endeavour to heal the schism and if possible bring the heretics back into the orthodox fold. A cry went forth from Europe that compromise in a general council and not a crusade by arms was the better method of dealing with the Hussites. But before consenting to peace negotiations through the council the Pope decided to make a last effort to reduce the heretics to subjugation by force. Hence on

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[1] Martène, *Amp. Coll.*, viii, 48 ; *Mon. Concil.*, i, 65.

1st August, 1431, a large army of crusaders under Frederick, the Margrave of Brandenburg, accompanied by Cesarini as Papal legate, crossed the Bohemian frontier, and a fortnight later upon encountering the army under Prokop the crusaders ignominiously fled almost without offering resistance. Thereupon the Roman See reluctantly consented to permit the Hussites to send representatives to the Council of Basel, although the Pope indignantly rejected their suggestion that members of the Greek Church should also be present.

The bitterness of the Bohemians had been to some extent mollified by a touching appeal addressed from Cesarini to them on 5th July, 1431, protesting his desire for peace rather than a crusade. Were they not all Christians? Why should the Bohemians wish to stray from the Holy Mother Church? Could a handful of Christians pretend to know the truth better than all the wise doctors of Christendom? He earnestly begged them to reflect on their sufferings and miseries, and return to the bosom of the Church while there was yet time. The Bohemians replied that they were prepared to prove the truth of the Four Articles of Prague by the Scriptures, that they were willing to appear before the Council of Basel to discuss their differences, and that they were desirous of co-operation to reform the Church in accordance with the word of God. At the same time, however, they denied that the general council was superior to the Bible and asserted their determination to defend God's truth against all who sought to attack them.[1] After the disastrous crusade Cesarini bluntly told Sigismund and the German princes that the Council of Basel was the only remedy that could effectively check the Hussite heresy, urged them to give it their undivided support, and hastened to Basel, where he arrived on 9th September.

121. *Hussites invited to Basel*

Since the suppression of the Hussite heretics was one of the principal objects in calling the council, a letter was written to the Bohemians on 15th October, 1431, begging them to join the council for the purpose of restoring unity to the Church. It was suggested in the communication that perhaps God had allowed discord so long in order to teach the Church the evils of dissention. Christ's disciples were bound to work for unity and peace. Surely Bohemia wished for peace, and where could it be obtained more certainly than in a general council guided by the Holy Ghost? The Bohemians would be given complete freedom to speak at the council, prayers of the faithful would help both sides, and the Holy Ghost would direct the hearts of all to find the truth. The most comprehensive safe-conducts would be given, and an honest effort would be made to appreciate the motives of the Bohemians. "Send us, we beseech you," the letter concluded, "men in whom you trust that the spirit of the Lord rests—gentle, God-fearing, humble, desirous of peace, seeking not their own, but the things of Christ."[1] Three copies of this famous letter were made and sent by different routes to insure its delivery. It breathed forth the true spirit of Christian charity, made no reference to the past, and sought to judge the differences anew on their merit. It was certainly a most important document to be addressed by a general council, whose predecessor had burned Huss, to his followers, against whom the Emperor and Pope from 1420 to 1431 had waged a crusade of extermination. Cesarini had come to see that compromise was the only means of adjustment.

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[1] Martène, *Amp. Coll.*, viii, 15; *Mon. Concil.*, i, 148.

The letter reached the Bohemians early in December, and prolonged negotiations ensued. In a conference with the Bohemians at Eger preliminaries about the appearance of the Hussites at Basel were settled in which it was agreed that they should be received honourably, given a fair hearing, be regarded in the discussions as free from all ecclesiastical censures, allowed to use their own rites of worship, and permitted to argue on the basis of "God's law, the practice of Christ, the apostles and the Primitive Church, as well as councils and doctors founded on the same true and impartial judge."[2] The council, as well as the Bohemian Diet, approved of these propositions, and on 20th June issued a safe-conduct to the representatives of the Hussites, who were appointed some months later. Meanwhile, in November, 1432, the council appointed four doctors, John of Ragusa, a Slav, Giles Carlier, a Frenchman, Henry Kalteisen, a German, and John Palomar, a Spaniard, to undertake the defence of the council against the Four Articles of Prague. Special precautions were also taken to abstain from everything that would shock Bohemian puritanism. Prostitutes were ordered off the streets, gambling and dancing were forbidden, and members of the council were enjoined to live model lives.[1] At the same time guards were appointed to prevent the Bohemians from spreading their errors in Basel.

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[1] *Mon. Concil.*, i, 135; Mansi, xxix, 233.

[2] Martène, *Amp. Coll.*, viii, 131; Creighton, ii, 217.

The seven nobles and eight priests named by the Bohemian Diet to represent the Hussites at the council, rode through Germany accompanied by a cavalcade of fifty horsemen, bearing a banner on which was embroidered a cup and the motto: "Truth Conquers All!" They entered Basel quietly on the evening of 4th January, 1433, while the citizens flocked to see these men of such terrible deeds of valour, and such twisted religious ideas.[2] It seems that as early as October, 1432, the Hussites had sent two delegates to Basel to consult over the "V articulos", but nothing further was recorded about the visit.[3] Among the official delegates were Prokop, John of Rokycan, Bishop Nicholas, and Peter Payne, the "English Hussite". Additional ambassadors arrived 2nd August, 1433, from the city of Prague and from the King of Bohemia.[4] A big crowd flocked to their services on 6th January, to the annoyance of Cesarini, who sought to check it, but John of Ragusa explained that "Freedom and neglect succeeded where restraint and prohibition would have failed, for human frailty is always eager after what is forbidden".[5] The next day Prokop invited John of Ragusa and some others to dine, and a spirited but friendly theological discussion took place. On 9th January, the council ordered that Wednesdays and Fridays should be observed as fast days on which prayers should be offered for union during the negotiations.

On 10th January, the Hussites were given their first hearing in a general congregation in which the Hussites were assigned two benches opposite the cardinals. Cesarini opened the proceedings with a long and eloquent oration, in which he urged peace and reunion and called the Bohemians sons whom the Church yearned to welcome to its bosom. John of Rokycan replied that they were seeking Christ, that the primitive Church should be taken as a model, that reformation of the clergy was badly needed, that they thanked the council for its courtesy, and that they would be glad to have a day appointed for a full hearing. 16th January was agreed upon in private conference for the discussion. The most friendly social courtesies were exchanged in the meantime between the two parties.

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[1] *Mon. Concil.*, i, 258; Creighton, ii, 236.

[2] Aen. Sylvius, *Hist. Bohem.*, ch. 49; Moeller, ii, 512, gives the number as 300.

[3] Palacky, *Urkundl. Beitr.*, ii, 325; Haller, i, 63–4.

[4] Haller, i, 68–71.

[5] *Mon. Concil.*, i, 259.

On the appointed day the conference began with a formal ratification of the safe-conduct and a verification of credentials. Then occurred one of the wordiest debates on record, which consumed 50 days with speeches eight days long. This war of words was opened by John of Rokycan with a defence of the Four Articles of Prague. First he discussed the Communion in both kinds, and sought to prove by the Bible, the practice of the Primitive Church, the decrees of the councils, and the testimony of the Church Fathers, that the rite as the Hussites used it was not only permissible but necessary. His speech three days long was given the keenest attention.[1] Prokop then leaped to his feet and passionately urged the members of the council to open their ears to the Gospel truth and not despise God by rejecting his heavenly banquet. Some of the Fathers took the floor to reply, but Cesarini persuaded them to let the Bohemians finish their arguments first, and put them in writing, after which the representatives of the Church would be given their opportunity to answer. On 20th January, Bishop Nicholas of Pilgram defended the second article in a speech two days long, in which he bitterly attacked the vices of the clergy, their simony, their obstruction of the spread of God's word, and their responsibility for the death of Huss and Jerome. The council was in an uproar—some laughed, others howled and gnashed their teeth. The old bishop demanded to know whether he was to be given a fair hearing. Cesarini ironically replied: "Yes, but pause occasionally to let us clear our throats." After he had finished, Rokycan censured him for his immoderation, and asked to speak on the third article, but the request was refused. On 23rd January, Ulrich of Zynaim spoke for two days on the freedom of preaching.[2] Three days later Peter Payne began a three days' speech on the temporal possessions of the clergy. He argued that the clergy should be content with food and clothing, that they should be forced to surrender their worldly possessions, and that all temporal lordship should be taken away from them.[1] Rokycan then thanked the Fathers for their patience, said that if their doctrines could be disproved, they were willing to amend them, and requested that their opponents should also reduce the heads of their arguments to writing. Cesarini asked if all the Bohemians held to the arguments advanced, and was answered "Yes". He then handed them thirty-six propositions mostly taken from Wiclif's writings, and asked them to answer in writing whether they held them or not. This was the first attempt to create schism in the ranks of the Bohemians.

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[1] Martène, *Amp. Coll.*, viii, 262; Creighton, ii, 239.
[2] Martène, *Amp. Coll.*, viii, 305.

On 31st January, the council was ready to begin its arguments. A Cistercian abbot first preached a sermon in which he offended the Hussites by exhorting them to submit to the council. John of Ragusa next began a technical refutation of the Communion in both kinds and argued that it was not only unnecessary, but unlawful. On this point he charged that the Hussites were heretics. Prokop exclaimed: "We are not heretics; if you say that we ought to return to the Church, I answer that we have not departed from it, but hope to bring others to it, you amongst the rest." A shout of laughter greeted the sally. An apology was made, and the discussion continued, while Cesarini was kept busy pouring oil on the troubled waters. On another day John of Ragusa pedantically said that it was beneath the dignity of a doctor (he was a professor in the University of Paris) to answer a master. Rokycan retorted: "Certainly John of Ragusa is not better than Christ; nor is John of Rokycan worse than the devil; yet Christ answered the devil." Three other orators, Carlier, Kalteisen, and John of Palomar presented their answers in the name of the council in a debate that lasted until 28th February. Rokycan was then permitted to sum up the Bohemian case, which consumed the time from 2nd to 10th March. The public discussion was at an end.

It was clear to all that the debate had emphasized the schism rather than furthered union. Hence the council appointed a committee of fifteen members with Cesarini at its head to come to some private agreement with the Bohemian delegates. Their meetings opened 11th March, and the tactful Cesarini employed all his eloquent powers to induce the Bohemians to incorporate themselves with the council, which could then proceed to adjust their differences. They answered: "You return with us to the Primitive Church; be united with us in the Gospel." Nicholas of Cusa asked whether they would join the council in case the council granted them Communion in both kinds. The Hussites finally refused the offer on the ground that they had no authority to accept, and because of the council's power. A smaller committee of four from each side was then named, with the hope that some compromise might be reached, but without avail. It was evident that the council must send envoys to Bohemia to deal with the Diet and the people, if unity were attained. Meanwhile deputations appeared before the council. On one of these occasions Kalteisen reproved Ulric of Zynaim for asserting that the devil instituted monasticism. Prokop replied: "I said one day to the president, 'If bishops have succeeded to the place of the apostles, and priests to the place of the seventy-two disciples, to whom except the devil have the rest succeeded?'" In the hilarity that ensued Rokycan shouted: "Doctor, you should make Prokop the head of your order." On 13th April, the Bohemians bade farewell to the council. Rokycan thanked the Fathers for their kindness, and Prokop urged the council to complete the reformation which all men longed for with sighs and groans, spoke of the worldliness of the clergy and the vices of the people, deplored the intrusion of the traditions of men into the Church, and mentioned the general neglect of preaching. Cesarini recapitulated all that had been done, thanked the Bohemians for their kind words, urged them to continue to labour for union in Bohemia, and gave them all his blessing. The next day they left accompanied by the representatives of the council.

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[1] Creighton, ii, 241.

In the light of the history of heresy in the Church, the results of the conference with the Hussites are truly significant. The straight-forwardness, plainness of speech, charity, mutual respect, and freedom of discussion were honourable to both sides in the controversy. When it is recalled that Huss and Jerome had been burned only sixteen years before, one is surprised at the generous treatment of a delegation of his followers. Never before in the history of the Church had a general council listened with such open minds, and equanimity to the arguments of heretics under the censure of the Roman Pontiff. Notwithstanding the wrangling and accusation, a better understanding between the two parties was reached. To the labours of the noble and generous Cesarini was due the success of the conference. If the fathers of the council were disappointed in the outcome, the Hussites were also disillusioned in the results. They had gone to Basel in the same child-like simplicity that had characterized Huss at Constance, believing that their arguments would convince the council that they were not heretics, and had not departed from the Church, but were the noblest reformers. In these endeavours they had failed, and no doubt they saw clearly for the first time that all they could expect was some sort of a compromise by which the Bohemians might be permitted to retain some of their peculiar rites and beliefs without separating from the Church. Of course even that concession could be looked upon as a victory. The real triumph of the Bohemians had been on the battlefield, and to that was due in no small measure the unprecedented friendly treatment at Basel. An historical precedent was set for later days, when another attempt was made to bring about a reconciliation with the Protestants.

The ten ambassadors of the Council, among whom were Carlier, John of Palomar, John of Geilhausen, and Alexander of Salisbury, were received with joy at Prague on 8th May. Until the Diet met on 13th June, they spent their time in exchanging courtesies with the Bohemian leaders. At the Diet after preliminary addresses, John of Palomar submitted the council's proposal for the incorporation of the Bohemians, and the adjustment of their common differences. He was informed that the Council of Constance had been the cause of the wars and disputes, that the Hussites always wished for peace, that they firmly adhered to the Four Articles of Prague, and that they would like to hear the council's conclusions. John of Palomar adroitly replied that the Four Articles seemed to be held differently by different persons, and that before he gave the council's opinion he would like to have the universal interpretation stated in writing. This clever move immediately brought to light the local differences, and led the ambassadors to enter into secret negotiations with the Utraquists to whom Communion in both kinds was promised if they would incorporate for the discussion of the other points. At last a vague form of agreement was drawn up in which the Bohemians agreed to unite with the council and obey "according to God's word". Three ambassadors were chosen to take this agreement, together with a new statement of the Four Articles, to Basel. On 11th July, they left with the council's envoys and arrived at Basel 2nd August, where they were given a warm welcome,[1] because one of the conciliar representatives who had hurried on ahead had reported that all Bohemia longed for peace, and urged the council to assume a conciliatory attitude. The other delegates upon their arrival in a full report confirmed these statements.

The council then appointed a committee of twenty-four with six members from each of the four commissions, who together with the cardinals were to confer on future proceedings. John of Palomar secretly reported to this committee on 13th August that Bohemia was in the hands of a small but vigorous faction, which feared to lose its power if it sanctioned a reconciliation with the Church; and that the only point upon which all parties agreed in Bohemia was Communion in both kinds.[2] After a long discussion as to what answer the council should give to the Hussite envoys, an extraordinary congregation was held on 26th August, which was attended by the Bohemian representatives and 160 doctors who were all bound to an oath of secrecy. John of Palomar then reported for the committee of twenty-four the necessity of making some concessions to bring about peace; that the Church could lawfully do that for the sake of unity; and that once back in the Church the Hussites would submit to the common rites. Cesarini urged the same course. So it was agreed to permit the use of Communion in both kinds, and an answer was prepared on the other three Articles. The Bohemians were dismissed with hopeful words on 2nd December, and nine days later four of the former ambassadors were dispatched to Bohemia to arrange the compromise. Meanwhile Bohemia was once more engulfed in the throes of civil war, and the peace mission of the delegation proved to be difficult, although they were cordially received at Prague on 22nd October.

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[1] Haller, i, 68.

[2] Creighton, ii, 251.

122. *The compromise*

The Diet opened on 17th November, and the proceedings resolved themselves into a diplomatic contest between the Bohemians who were determined to get all the advantages possible, and the envoys of the council who contested every concession. After a lengthy discussion in which the representatives of the council had the advantage, on 26th November the proposals of the council were presented to the Diet:—

1. If in all other points the Bohemians and Moravians received the faith and ritual of the Universal Church, those who had the use of communicating under both kinds should continue to do so, "with the authority of Jesus Christ and the Church, his true spouse." The question as a whole should be further discussed in the council; but the priests of Bohemia and Moravia should have permission to administer both kinds to those who, being of the age of discretion, reverently demanded it, at the same time telling them that under each kind was the whole body of Christ.

2. As regarding the correction and punishment of open sins, the council agreed that, as far as could reasonably be done, they should be represented according to the law of God and the institutes of the Fathers. The phrase used by the Bohemians, "by those whose duty it was," was too vague; and the duty did not devolve upon private persons, but on those who had jurisdiction in such matters.

3. About freedom of preaching, the word of God ought to be freely preached by priests who were commissioned by their superiors: "freely" did not mean indiscriminately, for order was necessary.

4. As regarding the temporalities of the clergy, individual priests, who were not bound by a vow of poverty, might inherit or receive gifts; and similarly the Church might possess temporalities and exercise over them temporal lordship. But the clergy ought to administer faithfully the goods of the Church, according to the institutes of the fathers; and the goods of the Church cannot be occupied by others.[1]

Since abuses may have gathered around these last three points, the Diet could send deputies to the council, which intended to proceed with the question of reform, and the envoys promised to aid them in every possible way.

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[1] Creighton, ii, 256.

After a further explanation of these propositions, the moderate party in the Diet forced the acceptance of the agreement on 30th November. The triumph of the council was due more to the dissentions among the Bohemians than to the concessions made to the heretics. The country was weary of war and longed for peace, and the old religious zeal had grown dim. The nobles were disgusted with the democratic practices of the extreme Taborites. Amidst these conditions the moderate party rallied its forces for reconciliation. Ten masters of the University of Prague signed a statement that they were willing to re-enter the Church on the terms agreed upon. The council's ambassadors returned to Basel on 15th February, 1434, and reported their victory. In April the barons of Bohemia and Moravia formed a league for the purpose of securing peace and order in the land. Prokop was aroused by this action and once more put himself at the head of the Taborites and Orphans. In the decisive battle of Lipan on 30th May, 1434, the champions of democracy in Church and State went down to final defeat before the representatives of the old order of things. Prokop and all the leading men of the party were slain. The irreconcilables were swept away and the council had the satisfaction of seeing Bohemia once more within the fold of the Church. The moderate party formulated its demands in a document known as " the compacts " based on the Four Articles of Prague, as follows :—

1. The Holy Sacrament is to be given freely in both kinds to all Christians in Bohemia and Moravia, and to those elsewhere who adhere to the faith of these two countries.
2. All mortal sins shall be punished and extirpated by those whose office it is to do so.
3. The word of God is to be freely and truthfully preached by the priests of the Lord, and by worthy deacons.
4. The priests in the time of the law of grace shall claim no ownership of worldly possessions.

The Church of Rome accepted these articles in a slightly modified form. The compacts were accepted and signed in 1436, at Iglau in Moravia by Sigismund, the Hussite delegates, and the representatives of the Roman church, who, however, refused to recognize John of Rokycan as the Archbishop of Prague. The compacts continued to be the creed of the established Church in Bohemia till all non-Roman religious services were prohibited shortly after the battle of White Mountain in 1620. The Bohemian Brethren continued the Taborite traditions during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and included most of the opponents of Rome in the country. After the outbreak of the Protestant Revolt many of them accepted the doctrines of Luther and Calvin, and succeeded in obtaining a repeal of the compacts in 1567.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE COUNCIL OF BASEL: III. REFORMS

123. *Reformatory efforts before Basel*

THE difficult problem of a searching reformation of the evils in the Church had confronted Christendom in an aggravatingly acute form for more than a century. At last the Council of Constance, through its several reform commissions, inaugurated a solution of the problem which had grown more serious with each passing year. In the end, however, Constance disappointed Europe with a few feeble reforms and shifted the responsibility for completing the work to the next general council. Martin V gave more thought to the recovery of Papal absolutism than to reformation, so little was done either by him or in the Council of Pavia and Siena, at which reformation was scarcely mentioned. These failures only incited the reform party in the Church to greater activity, to fiercer denunciations of the evils and abuses in pamphlets and sermons, and to the concentration of all hope in the coming council of Basel. The laity had become rebellious and was ready to wreak rebellious vengeance on the clergy. At the bottom of the Hussite secession lay the question of ecclesiastical abuses. All of the urgent demands for the summoning of the Council of Basel mentioned the need of reform as its most important task. Cardinal Cesarini in his famous letter to Eugenius IV in January, 1432, spoke of the "dissoluteness and disorder of the German clergy, by which the laity are sorely irritated against the Church—so much so, that there is reason to fear that, if the clergy do not mend their ways, the laity will attack them, as the Hussites do". If no general council was held, he thought it his duty to call a provincial synod to reform the clergy, "for unless the clergy be reformed I fear that" other heretical movements than the Hussite will break out. He feared the effect of the dissolution of the council on the mind of Europe. "Will it not judge that the clergy is incorrigible and wishes to moulder in its abuses?

So many councils have been held in our time, but no reform has followed. Men are expecting some results from this council; if it be dissolved, they will say that we mock both God and man. The whole reproach, the whole shame and ignominy, will fall upon the Roman curia as the cause and author of these ills." He declared that in Magdeburg and at Passau the people had already risen against their bishops, and similar threats were occurring elsewhere. Cesarini had his finger on the pulse of Europe and his warnings are the most significant utterances of the period.

124. *Attitude of the Council of Basel*

The Council of Basel was fully cognizant of the necessity of meeting the expectations of the progressive party in the Church. Hence in its organization for work the most important committee appointed was one devoted exclusively to reformation in whose personnel were distinguished men from all the leading European countries. Unfortunately, however, the contest between the council and the Pope monopolized the attention of the council for the first two years of its existence to the exclusion of all consideration of reforms. In November, 1432, Sigismund urged the council to busy itself with that problem. The only instance of an attempt at reformation prior to that time, was the measure passed on 13th July, 1432, abolishing reservations and provisions, except in the domain of the Holy See, and decreeing that elections to benefices should be made only by those to whom the right legally belonged, and that no fees be paid to the Pope for confirmation.[1] This decree was not regarded so much as a reform edict as a retaliatory act against the Pope to reduce his revenues. An important step was taken, however, on 26th November, in a decree which revived the synodal system throughout the Church and provided for the calling of a provincial synod at least once every three years for the purpose of suppressing heresy and correcting abuses and scandals. This measure likewise was aimed at the curtailment of Papal absolutism by extending the conciliar theory to the entire Church locally as well as generally.[2]

[1] Mansi, xxix, 61. Passed in 12th session.
[2] Creighton, ii, 230; Mansi, xxix, 74. Passed in 15th session.

The old right of election by chapters had been almost killed by the system of reservations and provisions.[1] Efforts had been made to restore the former practice, but the Popes had fought the revival. In 1432 the question was widely discussed and was considered in the committee on reformation. The problem was discussed in a pamphlet at the time called *A Dialogue between Jacob and John.* Jacob asks a series of radical questions and John answers in a conservative manner. John does not contend for an overthrow of Papal appointments, but for a big reduction.[2] The Bishop of Codix also wrote a treatise on the same subject, which was presented before the reform committee, in which he argues for a curtailment of Papal appointments.[3] The Patriarch of Antioch likewise took up the same subject and made a similar recommendation [4] in a speech in which he urged the change incorporated in the decree of 13th July, 1432, on the ground of civic versus Papal interests. He demanded that every bishop be required to possess a university degree and contended that the laity should have a part in the election of bishops. If chapters did not have twenty-four members, elections should be made from neighbouring foundations to complete the number.[5]

During the attempt to reconcile the Hussites naturally little attention was given to the formation of reform decrees, although it appears that the committee on reformation met at times and heard reports. For instance on 28th February, 1433, the representatives of the German nation submitted a reform programme similar to the one presented to Constance. It urged the reformation of the Papacy, the abolition of reservations and collations, and the revision of ecclesiastical taxation. The recommendations about *annates* were especially radical.[6]

The Cardinal of St Eustach presented another memorial before the reform committee in which he advocated that the clergy should be free from taxes; that tithes levied on the Church should be rigidly collected; that heresy should be suppressed; that provincial synods should be held, that the rules regarding the visitation of bishops, residence, and garments should be enforced, that luxurious clothing should be forbidden the bishops and cardinals; that the use of the confessional should be denied the members of the begging orders and their right to preach strictly limited; that a greater effort should be made to elect learned men to ecclesiastical offices; that law-suits in the Roman curia should be simplified and shortened; that a number of useless curial offices should be abolished; that bishops should not receive vacancy money or bonuses for appointments; that the income of monasteries should determine the number of inmates on the basis of 100 florins for two monks; and that abbots should be required to fill vacancies within six months.[1] Other memorials were likewise submitted to the committee on reformation,[2] but there are few traces of its further activity in 1432 and 1433.[3] This inactivity is all the more surprising since it was recognized on all sides that the most important and at the same time the most difficult task before the council was the complete reformation of the Church.[4]

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[1] Hinschius, *Kirchenrecht*, ii, 573.
[2] Haller, iii, 183.
[3] Ib., iii; Mansi, xxix, 61; *Mon. Concil.*, ii, 512.
[4] Mansi, xxix, 61; *Mon. Concil.*, ii, 402.
[5] Finke, *Forsch.*, 283.
[6] Goldast, i, 391; Hardt, 8, *Proleg.*, 32–4; Haller, i, 112–95.

Unlike the Council of Constance, Basel had an absolutely free hand in grappling with the problem of reform, for no power went to Basel with a programme of national reformation.[5] So suspicious was Martin V of the radical tendencies of general councils that he was genuinely hostile to a conciliar reformation of the Church.[6] He recognized the signs of a brewing revolution in Christendom, however, and sought to hold it in check through the work of a small curial committee. Hence in 1423 he had appointed three cardinals to draw up a plan for the reformation of the Papal curia, probably for action in the Council of Siena, but the programme was not even presented.[7] As the time for the holding of the Council of Basel approached, in 1430, he named another committee of four cardinals for the same purpose, and a report was prepared in which sections 1–13 and 18 recommended the improvement of the curial constitution, and sections 14–29 set forth propositions for the reform of the Papacy. With the death of the Pope the activity of the committee ceased, and the Council of Basel gave little heed to it, but its reform programme was used more or less until the sixteenth century.[8] The council occasionally referred to it as it did to the eighteen articles of the 40th session of Constance.[1]

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[1] Haller, i, 112, 114.
[2] Ib., 206–33.
[3] Ib., i, 114.
[4] Ib., 107.
[5] Mansi, xxix, 635.
[6] Haller, i, 108–10.
[7] Ib., i, 163.
[8] Ib., 109–10.

In 1434 the Council of Basel was at the zenith of its power. The Pope had been forced to recognize its sovereignty, and the Bohemian heretics had been subdued by concessions and compromise.[2] The time seemed opportune to give attention to the complicated and knotty problem of a genuine reformation of the Church, the promise of which had been dangling before the hopeful eyes of Christendom for so many years, and the realization of which was so sadly needed to enable the Roman Church to fulfil its mission in the world. In this perplexing task the council had the sympathy and assistance of the progressive party in Europe, the support of Sigismund, the plea of the Hussites, and the practically unanimous agreement in the abstract of all its members. No greater opportunity to purify and spiritualize the degenerate Church of Rome had ever come to any council, and the future power and usefulness as well as the unity of the Church, depended upon the actions of that body of wise men from all parts of Christendom.

The council soon discovered that it was much more exciting and indeed easier to wage war on the Pope and to treat with heretics, who were hopelessly divided among themselves, than to remedy ecclesiastical abuses. Private privilege and personal selfishness were the rocks on which the reform movement went to pieces. Each grade of the clergy was willing to help reform its neighbour, but had much to urge in its own defence—the same collision of interest that had helped to wreck reform efforts at Constance. In the absence of the true spirit of self-sacrifice for the salvation of the soul, good name and usefulness of the Church, the members of the Council found themselves in complete agreement on one point, namely, that the Papacy should be thoroughly reformed. The resentment still prevalent against the Pope. The fact that he was not present to defend himself and the belief that he could be used as the scapegoat for the sins of the clergy made that suggestion very popular. Such a course would satisfy the personal enemies of Eugenius IV and would be another evidence of victory to the champions of conciliar supremacy. Sigismund, who had on several previous occasions urged the fathers to begin the work of a practical reformation, was disgusted with the spirit of the council as well as with the lack of deference shown his office, declared that he was of no more value in the council than a fifth wheel in a wagon, and resolved to leave.

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[1] Hardt, iv, 1449; Hübler, 35.

[2] See letter of Ulrich Stoeckel in Haller, i, 81–2.

Before departing, however, he made another attempt to direct the mind of the council to the initiation of a correction of clerical evils. He sent the bishop of Lübeck to the four committees to suggest that the rule of celibacy should be abolished. " It is vain," the bishop urged, " that priests are deprived of their wives. Not one in a thousand is true to his vows. Celibacy breaks the bond of friendship between the clergy and the laity. The freedom of the confessional is rendered suspicious. There is no fear that the married clergy will take the property of the Church for their wives and families. This permission to marry will bring the best men into the Church, and the nobles will be less desirous of secularizing ecclesiastical property, if it is in the hands of their relatives and friends." The aged Cardinal of St Peter's said: " Although I am an old man and have no inclination to matrimony, yet I think it would be a holy act to 'restore' their wives to the clergy, for the grace of being able to resist the law of the flesh is not given to all men." Close attention was given to these arguments, but " the old ", wrote Aeneus Sylvius, " condemned what had no charms for them. The monks bound by a vow of chastity, grudged that secular priests should have a privilege denied to themselves." So the majority voted that the time was not ripe for such a radical change, because it would be too great a shock to popular prejudice.[1]

The edict in reference to concubinage is typical of the great difficulty the council experienced in obtaining clerical support for its enforcement of any reform act. For over a thousand years the Fathers of the Church had passed laws to keep the clergy pure and morally sound. But they were all soon despised and ignored. A profound moral sense of what was right and what was wrong was absolutely essential to the suppression of concubinage. The enforcement of the law rested after all with the individual priest, and for that very reason the edict failed of its purpose. The only remedy was to permit the priesthood to take wives legally. The utter impotence of the law of the council is shown in the fact that within five years Doctor Kokkius in a sermon preached before the synod of Freysingen could scarcely find words to denounce the evil practices of the clergy as a class. Ten years later Nicholas V declared that the clergy scarcely regarded incontinence as a sin, both in his own court at Rome and throughout the Church. He virtually legalized the practice when he ordered that all who persisted in keeping concubines in defiance of the rules of the Church, should be rendered incapable of receiving benefices unless they secured special letters of indulgences from the Holy See.[1]

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[1] Creighton, ii, 266; Mansi, xxix, 101; Lea, *Hist. of Sacerdotal Celib.*, p. 389.

Sigismund then addressed the council in person and advised the members to reorganize it by nations on the model of Constance. He also recommended that the reformation of the Church should be attempted by permitting each nation to enact its own changes in rites and ceremonies and its own amendments in clerical life and practices, because in that event the secular powers would be more likely to accept the reforms. The committees courteously replied that they would take his advice under consideration. The Emperor departed on 19th May, 1434, in an ugly mood, declaring that he left behind him " a sinkhole of iniquity ".

Andreas, Bishop of Minorca, addressed a letter to Cesarini in 1435, in which he argued for reformation in these words: " Evils, sins and scandals have so increased, especially among the clergy, that, as the Prophet says, already accursed lying and theft, and adultery and simony, and murder and many other crimes have deluged the earth. . . . The avarice and lust of dominion and the foul and abominable lives of the ecclesiastics are the causes of all the misfortunes of Christendom. The infidel and heretic say that if the Christian faith and Gospel law were true and holy, the prelates and priests would not live as they do, nor would the spiritual rulers work such confusion and scandal in Christendom without instant punishment from the Lord Jesus Christ, the founder of the Gospel and the Church." [2] He further urged that the council condemn by an unalterable decision that impious doctrine of some canonists that the Pope could not commit simony.

Hardouin, the Bishop of Angers, despondently admitted in 1428 that licentiousness had become so habitual among his clergy that it was no longer reputed to be a sin; that concubinage was public and undisguised; that the patrimony of Christ was wasted in supporting the guilty partners of the priesthood; that gambling, swearing, drunkenness, and all manner of unclerical conduct accompanied these disorders.[1]

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[1] Lea, *Hist. of Sacerdotal Celib.*, 390. [2] Lea, *Hist. of the Inq.*, iii, 638.

Cesarini, the wisest and ablest man in the council by far, who was very seriously alarmed about the deplorable conditions in the Church, begged the council to give its most serious attention to the problem of reforms.[2] In plain words he told the fathers that the best men in Europe were becoming dangerously critical of the inactivity of the council in the correction of flagrant abuses. The reports of the reform commissions of Constance were accepted as a basis for procedure. The question of simony was the first problem brought fairly before the council for consideration, but the greatest difficulty was experienced in keeping to the point, because of the petty quarrels among the prelates, hence little progress was made. The arrival of ambassadors, 12th July, to confer over union with the Greeks postponed further discussion for some months.

125. *Reform Edicts*

After the departure of the Greeks, the council resumed its perplexing and wearisome task of remedying ecclesiastical evils. Finally, on 22nd January, 1435, the council had reached an agreement on four decrees:—

1. The penalties of interdict and excommunication were limited to the places and persons who were guilty and thus unjust and precipitate action was prevented.
2. Appeals of a frivolous character were forbidden.
3. Stricter measures were to be taken to prevent the concubinage of the clergy. Notorious offenders who refused to dismiss their consorts within 60 days, were to be deprived of three months' revenue and admonished under pain of deprivation to put away their concubines. Fines paid to bishops for tolerating this irregularity were prohibited. Bishops who neglected to enforce the law were held as sharing the guilt, and were fined double the licence fee.[3]

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[1] Lea, *Hist. of Sacerdotal Celib.*, 387; Martène-Durand, iv, 523.

[2] Haller, i, 98, 91.

[3] Lea, *Hist. of Sacerotal Celib.*, 389.

4. Theatricals and other entertainments in churches and churchyards were forbidden.[1]

Once more the council was called from the work of reform to consider the reconciliation of the Greeks, so it was not until 9th June, 1435, that another decree was passed abolishing *annates*, and all dues on presentations when receiving the pallium, and on all like occasions.[2] At the same time certain abuses that had crept into divine services were forbidden. The abolition of the *annates* had been demanded at Constance, but in view of the Pope's financial needs, deferred.[3] As early as June, 1434, the committee on reform had been instructed to bring in a report on the suppression of the *annates*.[4] The edict made it a simoniacal offence either to demand or to pay *annates*. Any Pope who attempted to demand them was to be judged by a general council. Since this reform was manifestly aimed at the Pope, the Papal presidents protested and were backed in their opposition by the English and many other members of the council. Even Cesarini gave his assent to it only on condition that some other suitable provision be made for the income of the Pope and the college of cardinals. Since they relied so largely upon this source of revenue for their support, this reform was too harsh, however badly it was needed, and more thought should have been given to its consequences. Only four cardinals and forty-eight prelates were present when it was published. The council seems to have been actuated largely by a desire to deprive Eugenius IV of funds to continue his negotiations with the Greeks.[5] This mistake on the part of the reform party was the occasion for the organization of the Papal and conservative forces in the council into a formidable party under the leadership of the Archbishop of Tarento and the Bishop of Padua, who were joined by the ardent advocate of reform, Traversari, who hastened to Basel to defeat the " lawless mob ", and supported by the Italians in large numbers, because they were proud of the Papacy as an Italian institution and disliked to see its power and glory diminished. The decree also drew the progressive party more closely together and made them more determined than ever to reduce the Papal monarchy to the will of a conciliar oligarchy.

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[1] Mansi, xxix, 101. Passed in the 20th session.

[2] Haller, i, 236, gives the document on the granting of benefices. Ib., i, 90 Mansi, xxix, 104. Passed in 21st session.

[3] Voigt, *Ænea. Silvio.*, i, 76–77 ; Pastor, i, 309.

[4] Palacky, *Mon. Concil.*, ii, 693. John of Segovia was a member of this committee. Haller, i, 24.

[5] Creighton, ii, 270.

A test case involving the decree of 9th June, 1435, was brought before the council when the pallium was bestowed upon the newly appointed Archbishop of Rouen on 11th December. The Papal curia demanded the payment of the customary pallium dues. The council objected to this as a violation of its decree and on 11th January, 1436, admonished the Pope to retract all he had said and done against the authority of the council and to accept its decrees. In a spirit of irritation the council on 22nd March, 1436, issued its decree for the complete reformation of the Pope and the college of cardinals, which had been discussed in 1434,[1] and again in connection with the reform of the method of granting benefices in 1435.[2] This measure provided:

1. For the reorganization of the method of Papal election. Each cardinal in conclave was to swear that he would not recognize the Pope-elect until he had taken an oath to call general councils in accordance with the law of the Church and to obey the decrees of the Council of Basel. The very form of the Papal oath [3] was specified, and it was further provided that on each anniversary of his election the oath and an exhortation to observe it should be read to the Pope in conjunction with the service of the mass.

2. For the limitation of the number of cardinals to twenty-six, of whom twenty-four were to be not under thirty years of age, graduates in law or theology, and in no wise related to the Pope or any living cardinal. The other two might be elected for some valid reason of service to the Church even if not university graduates.[4] An oath was prescribed for the newly-appointed cardinals and they were instructed how to live.

3. For the free and unrestricted election of prelates by chapters.

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[1] Haller, i, 236, 241.

[2] Ib., 241. Gives the document for the reformation of the college of cardinals.

[3] The oath was the same as that prescribed at Constance with some additions.

[4] This decree was based on that of Constance which is quoted.

4. For the abolition of all reservations, unconditionally.[1] This was the very thing the Germans had demanded at Constance, but had not obtained.

126. *Papal Opposition and Hostility of Conservatives*

These decrees which seemed to the Pope an invasion of his historic rights and undoubted prerogatives, were denounced as unwarranted and illegal. That they were retaliatory and enacted with the intent of abasing Papal absolutism seems quite clear. The council promulgated them as evidence both of its sincerity in the reform movement and of its triumph in upholding conciliar supremacy. The result was a sharper tension than ever between the Pope and the council, with both sides complaining of undue pretensions. Instead of correcting the abuses complained of in connection with indulgences, the council claimed the right to grant them. On 14th April, 1436, a conciliar decree bestowed plenary indulgences, such as were given to crusaders and to pilgrims to Rome in jubilee years, upon all who contributed money for the forthcoming conference with the Greeks.[2] Eugenius IV was ordered to recognize the council's right to grant indulgences, but he demanded the right at least to co-operate with the council in issuing them. On 11th May the council complained that the Pope was continually opposing the reform decrees and other measures, and attempting in every way to undermine its authority and success. Hence the Papal presidents resigned their office and left the council. Again the Pope and council were at open war. Eugenius IV drew up a long defence of his conduct, enumerated all the wrongs he had suffered at the hands of the council, mentioning particularly the decrees diminishing Papal revenues and powers, granting indulgences, and changing the old method of election. In sarcastic terms he commented upon the unparliamentary procedure of the council, denounced its democratic organization by committees of laymen and clergy high and low, pointed out its intense partisanship, and assailed its acts as a conspiracy against his office. He stated his intention to order the princes of Christendom to withdraw their support from the council, which had also insolently threatened them. So far as reformation was concerned, he promised to call a council in Italy, which the state of his health would permit him to attend, in which all the abuses of the curia would be abolished.[1]

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[1] Creighton, ii, 173; Mansi, xxix, 110. Passed in the 23rd session.
[2] Haller, i, 98.

This bold defiance of the Pope immediately rallied the conservative forces both within and without the council to his support. Cesarini, who had laboured most sincerely for the reform of the Church, and had even agreed to the abolition of *annates*, by which as a cardinal he suffered in his own income, although he had not approved the edicts of 22nd March, 1436, deserted the liberal party and now led the Papal party. With him went the Italian clergy except the Milanese and some of the doctors of theology. Other prelates from various parts of Europe, conservatives by nature or office, under obligation to the Pope or hostile to the council, likewise sided with the Papal party. Many of them had joined the progressive party when it stood for a genuine reformation which the Pope opposed, but when it became apparent that under the disguise of reform the leaders of that party were seeking to usurp Papal power and to transfer it to the hands of a self-elected, non-representative oligarchy in control of the council, they deserted the liberal faction and joined the Pope. The rallying slogan of the conservatives was that the liberals were led by the French [2] who in the name of democracy, conciliar supremacy, and reform, were merely carrying on the old Avignon policy against Rome. The best statement of their arguments is found in the letter of Traversari to Sigismund in January, 1436: "The Council of Basel has found time for nothing but the subversion of Catholic peace and the depression of the Pope. They have now been assembled for five years; and see on how wrongful a basis their business proceeds. In former days bishops, full of the fear of God, the zeal of religion, and the fervour of faith, used to settle the affairs of the Church. Now the matter is in the hands of the common herd; for scarcely out of 500 members, as I saw with my own eyes, were there twenty bishops; the rest were either the lower orders of the clergy, or mere laymen; and all consult their private feelings rather than the good of the Church. No wonder that the council drags on for years, and produces nothing but scandal and danger of schism. The good men are lost in the ignorant and turbulent multitude. The French, led by the Cardinal of Arles and the Archbishop of Lyons, want to transfer the Papacy to France. Where every one seeks his own interest, and the vote of a cook is as good as that of a legate, or an archbishop, it is shameless blasphemy to claim for their resolutions the authority of the Holy Ghost. They aim only at a disruption of the Church. They have set up a tribunal on the model of the Papal court; they exercise jurisdiction, and draw causes before them. They confer the pallium on archbishops, and claim to grant indulgences. They aim at nothing less than the perpetuation of the council, in opposition to the Church." [1]

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[1] Raynaldus, 1436, n. 2, 16; Pastor, i, 309–10.

[2] The French constituted a majority of the assembly, and offered no opposition to any measure against the Pope. Their real object was expressed in brutal frankness by the Bishop of Tours: "We must either wrest the Apostolic See from the hands of the Italians, or else despoil it to such a degree that it will not matter where it abides." Pastor, i, 310–11.

Pope Eugenius IV, convinced that there was no hope of coming to terms with the progressive party at Basel, addressed an encyclic to the sovereigns of Europe, in which he condemned the irregular proceedings of the council against both the office and prerogatives, and the person of the Pope. He pointed out particularly that the decrees of the twenty-third session affirming the superiority of a general council to the Roman Pontiff, the effort to prescribe the method of electing a head for the Church, and the attempt to regulate the government of the Papal court were unwarranted and uncanonical. He argued that the council had presumed to deal with a number of subjects manifestly beyond its competency. He said that the council also had interfered very imprudently in political issues, distracting Europe, without any warrant, and had thus defeated the main purpose for which it had been summoned. And he intimated that considering the circumstances, he would be justified in dissolving or at least transferring the council.[2]

127. *The Progressive Party*

The activity of the Papal party in turn aroused the progressives, whose strength came from the French led by the Cardinal of Arles, the Spanish under King Alfonso of Aragon, who was the political enemy of Eugenius IV, the English, the

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[1] Quoted in Creighton, ii, 277.

[2] Alzog, ii, 887.

Germans who desired to reduce Papal influence, and the Milanese and south Italians under the leadership of the Duke of Milan. All the enemies of the Pope, all the adventurers who had nothing to lose and everything to gain, and all honest reformers allied themselves with this party, which still constituted a large majority in the council but was sadly deficient in efficient and wise leadership. The French were in the majority in numbers and were looked to for guidance. The princes in Europe were inclined to give this party their support, but with the subsidence of the Bohemian question, they became somewhat indifferent.

With the renaissance of the controversy over Papal and conciliar supremacy and the enforced precedence given to the selection of a suitable place for the conference with the Greeks, the whole programme of reform was permitted to fall into the background once more never to be revived.

Eugenius IV opposed the reform measures enacted by the Council of Basel, not so much because he had no interest in reforming the Church, but chiefly because the various edicts were for the most part aimed at his own prerogatives. As early as 1431 he urged the amendment and regeneration of the religious orders first, and then of the clergy. During his entire Pontificate he gave considerable attention to the improvement of the morals of the secular and regular clergy. His own life was pure and unspotted, and he was studiously guiltless of nepotism. In 1432 he took the reform of the Roman clergy in hand, and continued the work even during his exile. After his return to Rome in 1434 he resumed the difficult task of improving the discipline of the clergy. While in Florence he took great pains to reform the monasteries in and about that city. It is indeed a great pity that the council and the Pope could not have co-operated in the great work of reformation, because in that event something worth while might have been accomplished.[1] One cannot place all the blame for the failure of the work of purifying the Church on his shoulders, nor does he deserve as much censure as has been bestowed upon him for opposing the reform decrees of the council, when it is remembered that most of them were passed for the purpose of humbling and intimidating him rather than for the welfare of Christendom.

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[1] Pastor, i, 356–7.

128. *Additional Reform Decrees and Summary of Efforts*

The last three reform decrees were passed at the thirty-first session in January, 1438. The first decree strictly limited the number of causes dependent upon Rome for decision. The second decree dealt with the collation of benefices. The Pope was forbidden to grant any more expectancies and special reservations. The third decree set forth the qualifications for recipients of benefices. Every cathedral church was to have one *theologus* and one-third of the prebendal stalls were to be filled with graduates. Only university men were to be appointed parish priests in the towns.[1]

The following summary of the reforms enacted at Basel reveals the fact that a good beginning was made, although the measures fell far short of what was ardently expected from the council :—

1. Reservations were forbidden as unauthorized by canon law.
2. The election of higher clergy in the Church was restored to the chapters.
3. The use of the interdict was restricted and the traffic in excommunications was regulated.
4. Appeals of a trivial character were to be settled in local courts and not carried to Rome.
5. The concubinage practised by the bishops and priests was prohibited.
6. Childish and foolish festivals, theatres, dances, banquets, markets, etc., in the churches and on Church property were abolished.
7. Rules were laid down for the proper celebration of the mass, and for the strict observance of the ecclesiastical festivals.
8. Simony and ecclesiastical corruptions for money were forbidden.
9. The *annates* were done away with.
10. The method of choosing a Pope was reformed.
11. The college of cardinals was limited in number and improved in character and education.
12. The number of causes over which Rome had jurisdiction was strictly limited.

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[1] Mansi, xxix, 159.

13. Efforts were made to secure worthier occupants for ecclesiastical offices.

14. Expectancies and special reservations were forbidden.

Just as the European powers after the Council of Constance secured some wholesome reforms by means of concordats, so, following the enactment of the last of the reform decrees of Basel, the King of France, Charles VII, adopted for the French Church the reforms with certain modifications in the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges on 7th July, 1438,[1] which decreed :—

1. The recognition of the supremacy of general councils, which should be held every ten years.
2. The abolition of *annates* and first-fruits.
3. The election of occupants of large benefices.
4. The limitation of the number of cardinals to twenty-four.

This document became the foundation of the so-called Gallican Liberties.

In Germany the Basel reforms were likewise secured for the German Church in a deed of acceptance, executed by the new Emperor, Albert II, and the Empire at Mainz, on 26th March, 1439.[2] Frederick III who succeeded Albert II remained neutral for several years, but finally gave his adhesion to Eugenius, as a result of the corruption of his chief minister, Caspar Schlick, and the treachery of Aeneus Sylvius, a superb opportunist. In 1446, the six electors recognized Eugenius on condition that he grant the superiority of a general council over Papal power, and agree to call a new council to be held on German soil within 13 months. As a result the *Fursten Konkordat* was drawn up and confirmed in the Vienna Concordat of 1448, which stipulated :—

1. That a general council of the Church was superior to the Pope.
2. That the deposed Archbishops of Treves and Cologne be restored.
3. That the Emperor Frederick III be given during his lifetime the right to name six bishops.

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[1] Pinson, *Pragmatique Sanction*, Paris, 1666. Vol. xiii, 267, of *Ordonnances des Rois de France de la troisième Race*; Mirbt, *Quellen*, 160, gives extracts.

[2] Münch, *Sammlung aller älteren u. neueren Konkordate*, i, 42 ff.

4. That he also be granted the privilege with the Pope's approval of filling 100 benefices in Austria.

In Papal bulls the Pope sanctioned these concordats.[1]

After having witnessed the efforts to reform the Church at Constance and Basel, the level-headed friend of reform, Master John Nider, a Dominican, declared that a general reform of the Church in head and members was a practical impossibility. In his chief work, *Formicarius*, he endeavoured to show that under existing circumstances only a partial reform could be obtained. The higher clergy had it in their hands to reform the Church and "its several orders", where it "had suffered damage", by instructing men "in the way of serving God", and "in word and deed so to behave themselves that they deserve to be led in this by the spirit of God", but they had failed to meet their responsibility and opportunity. The Councils of Constance and Basel made it their special business to reform the Church in its head and members. At Basel much was said about reform—indeed in all its decrees the council called itself a council of reform, and it even established a committee on reform, "and for six whole years the amendment of the various ranks of the clergy has been dealt with, but we have not perceived any result." In answer to the question as to whether a general reform of the Church could be realized, he replied: "I have absolutely no hope at present, or in the near future; for good-will is wanting among the subjects, the evil disposition of the prelates constitutes an obstacle, and, finally, it is profitable for God's elect to be persecuted by the wicked." The Church is like a building about to be erected, with a skilled architect, plenty of material for construction, but lacking a good master-builder—without whom it would be unwise to attempt the work. Hence he concluded that a general reformation was out of the question, but that a partial reform might be realized.[2]

129. *Results of Failure of Efforts to reform the Church*

The Babylonian Captivity and the Great Schism had made Europe realize the imperative necessity of a complete reformation of the Church. The Council of Pisa had held out the hope that it would be accomplished in the next general Council at

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[1] Mirbt, 165.

[2] Schieter, *Joh. Nider*, 188.

Constance. The Council of Constance created the necessary machinery for the discussion and promulgation of a programme of reforms, enacted some decrees which were wholly inadequate to the needs of the time, and then shifted the responsibility for the completion of the work to the head of the Church and a future general council. The Council of Pavia-Siena skilfully eluded taking the initiative in the work. The Council of Basel failed deplorably and shamefully to meet the expectations of the reform party in the Church and missed its great opportunity. In 1437, John Nider, the Dominican, declared that the general reformation of the Church was hopeless on account of the wickedness of the prelates and the lack of good-will of the clergy. Partial reforms might be practicable, but even in this the difficulty was well nigh insuperable. The council, he complained, in the six years of its existence, had been unable to reform a single nunnery, although aided by all the force of the secular power.[1] The few reforms attempted and enacted into decrees were not recognized by Eugenius IV and his successors as canons of the Church. Even in France and Germany, where the reform party was strongest, the old abuses were reinstated, with all their deplorable consequences. The writers of the second half of the fifteenth century were as emphatic as their predecessors in denouncing the universal turpitude of the Church in language that was not poetical or exaggerated. An extreme case of moral depravity was that of Nicaise le Vasseur, canon and head of the chapter of Arras, who died at the ripe age of 80. He not only had daughters with whom he committed incest, but also with a daughter-grand-daughter, whom he had by one of them. Yet so blunted was the moral sense of the Church and people that the chronicler told how " very nobly " he officiated in divine services on all feasts and holidays. When Sixtus IV died in 1474, the people rejoiced, and commented not so much on the sale of offices and benefices and his other devices of extorting money, as upon the bribes of rich bishoprics and archbishoprics given to boys for satisfying his unnatural lusts. Under Innocent VIII and Alexander VI things could not be much worse. Julius II was a warrior statesman, rather than a Pope. When forced to summon the Lateran Council, earnest souls like Jacob Wimpfeling expressed the hope that he would set some bounds to the moral plague which infected all the churches.[1] To Leo X, Pico della Mirandola wrote a letter describing the reforms so badly needed. The list included the same old evils and abuses: the neglect of the worship of God; pimps and catamites among the clergy; the use of nunneries as dens of prostitution; hatred or favour decided cases of justice; piety was lost in superstition; the priestly office was bought and sold; the ecclesiastical revenues were used for the foulest excesses; and people were repelled from the Christian faith by the bad examples of the clergy. The contempt so generally entertained for the Church was occasioned by the scandalous lives of its officials.[2]

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[1] Lea, *Hist. of the Inq.*, iii, 638.

Aeneus Sylvius, far from a puritan himself and exceptionally well acquainted with Christendom, wrote in 1453: "It is for this I dread the Turks. Whether I look upon the deeds of the princes, or of prelates, I find that all have sunk—all are worthless. There is not one who does right—in no one is there piety or truth. There is no recognition of God on earth; you are Christians in name, but you do the work of heathen. Execration and falsehood, slaughter and theft, and adultery are spread among you, and you add blood to blood. What wonder if God, indignant at your acts, places on your neck Mahomet, the leader of the Turks, like another Nebuchadnezzar, for you are either swollen with pride, or rapacious with avarice, or cruel in wrath, or livid with envy, or incestuous in lust, or unsparing in cruelty. There is no shame in crime, for you sin so openly and shamelessly that you seem to take delight in it." [3]

The aspirations of Christendom culminated in the Council of Basel, and its failure to measure up to those high hopes was so disastrous that the Church never recovered from the effects. The immoral and unspiritual darkness grew thicker and deeper under the rule of such leaders as Innocent VIII and Alexander VI. The earnest reformer, Savonarola, found an inexhaustible theme for denunciation in the fearful vices of the ecclesiastics of his day, whom he describes as *ruffiani e mezzani*. All attempts at reformation from without the Church had been successfully crushed and sternly punished. All efforts at reformation from within had failed ignominiously and deplorably. The corruption of the Church had reached a point which the dawning enlightenment of the age could not endure much longer. The muttered thunders of popular discontent were heard everywhere. The laity were losing their blind faith and reverence, were daily growing more intelligent, and were asking significant questions about the very foundations of the medieval Church. These conditions could not persist for many years—they either had to be met and rectified, or an explosion would be the result.

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[1] Lea, *Hist. of the Inq.*, iii, 639.

[2] Ib., 639.

[3] Quoted in ib., 643.

CHAPTER XIX

THE COUNCIL OF BASEL—FERRARA—FLORENCE : IV. REUNION OF THE GREEK AND LATIN CHURCHES

130. *History of the Problem*

THE question of reuniting the Greek and Latin Churches had been mooted at Constance, slumbered under Martin V, and was ardently revived under Eugenius IV. The Council of Basel sought to take the initiative of this great enterprise into its own hands, and in January, 1433, sent ambassadors to Greece to inaugurate steps for the proposed union. On 12th July, 1434, Greek representatives arrived at Basel and were graciously received by the members of the council. The first question to be settled was the selection of a suitable place for the conference and the provision of funds to pay the expenses of the Grecian delegation, which their advance agents demanded. The Greeks suggested some city in Italy, or Savoy, or even Vienna for the discussion, while the council advanced the claims of Basel.

Eugenius IV, who desired all the credit for the reunion, was also visited by another set of delegates at Bologna, whither the Pope had fled. The council in order to raise money for the conference had on 14th April, 1436, authorized the sale of indulgences, but when it was computed that at least 200,000 ducats would be required to bring the Greeks to Basel, that plan was dropped, and other cities were asked to make a bid for the conference.[1] Venice, Milan, Florence, Pavia, and Avignon all promised to meet the conditions, and sent committees to Basel to harangue the council in favour of their respective cities. The Pope favoured Venice, or Florence, or even far away Constantinople ; but for that reason the council opposed them and suggested Milan, Pavia, or Avignon, where Papal influence was not so strong. The question of a suitable place became a party issue between the progressives and conservatives. Cardinal d'Allemand was the recognized leader of the liberals; and Cesarini deserted the reform party and went over to the Papal party and powerfully supported some place agreeable to Eugenius IV. The progressives saw that they could control a large majority in the council, and forced the vote on 5th December, 1436, which resulted in 242 to 114 voices in favour first of Basel, secondly Avignon, and thirdly Savoy. But the Greeks refused Basel, and Savoy had not raised the necessary money; hence the decision was really for Avignon. Cesarini and the Papal faction vehemently protested, and the Greek ambassador who arrived at Basel in February, 1437, likewise objected; Avignon was requested to raise 70,000 ducats within 30 days to support the conference, with the threat that if it was not done another city would be selected.[1]

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[1] Martène-Durand, *Amp. Coll.*, viii, 895.

131. *Quarrel between Council and Pope over place of Conference*

On 1st April, 1437, the Archbishop of Taranto, as a new Papal legate, accompanied by the Greek ambassadors who had visited Eugenius IV at Bologna, arrived and assumed the leadership of the Papal party. Since Avignon failed to raise the money stipulated, he and Cesarini urged the council to select another place. So on 17th April, the question of adhering to Avignon or choosing another city was put to a vote in the four committees. Numerically the Papal party had 70 votes and the liberals 200, but three presidents of the committees were members of the Papal party and refused the votes for Avignon as technically incorrect, which gave the decision to the minority. Of course the majority loudly protested. The minority withdrew and sat separately. A deadlock ensued. The conciliar party with a big majority published its decree on 26th April in favour of Avignon. The Papal party, a minority, published its decree in favour of Florence or Udine. The old conflict between the council and the Pope was renewed with bitterness and violence. The following Sunday both the Cardinal of Arles, who represented the liberals, and the Archbishop of Taranto, who led the conservatives, attempted to occupy the cathedral to celebrate mass. Only the civic guards prevented an open fight in the cathedral which was crowded and in an uproar. A new schism was threatened. The leaders finally recovered their senses, suspended the congregations, and for six days laboured in vain to bring about some compromise.

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[1] Creighton, ii, 297–8.

On 7th May the rival parties in a solemn session fought to gain control of the council in order to decree their contradictory resolutions. The Cardinal of Arles and the progressives took possession of the altar in the cathedral and filled it with armed men. The Papal party arrived later. All efforts at agreement failed. The session opened and the Bishop of Albiena mounted the pulpit and began to read the decree of the majority party. The Bishop of Porto immediately mounted a secretary's table and began to read the report of the minority. Each bishop tried to out-shout the other. Meanwhile the Cardinal of Arles, who was presiding, stormed and called for order. The minority's decree was the shorter and when it was read the Papal party began to sing the *Te Deum*. When the majority's decree was concluded, they started to sing the *Te Deum*. The wildest confusion followed, and thus was ushered in another schism to rend and demoralize the Church of Christ. In the troubled days that followed it was discovered that the seal of the council, which had been put in the hands of three guards, had been stolen and affixed to both decrees. The Pope immediately ratified the decree of the minority and on 30th May issued a bull designating Florence or Udine as the seat of a future council and forthwith informed all European princes of his action. The Greeks were easily induced to cast in their lot with the Papal party, which was of course a decisive factor on the issue involved in the quarrel.

132. *Conflict between the Council and the Pope*

Sigismund protested against the transference of the council to Italy and the Duke of Milan strenuously objected to the selection of Florence. The Council of Basel, angered and humiliated at the apparent victory of the minority supported by the Pope, decided to recover its prestige and resume its leadership in dealing with the Greeks, by bringing about the personal humiliation of Eugenius IV. Hence on 31st July, 1437, it issued a monition to the Pope accusing him of repudiating its decrees, of invalidating its reform endeavours, of wasting the patrimony of the Holy See, and of refusing to co-operate in union with the Greeks. Hence he was summoned to appear at Basel within 60 days, either personally or by proctors, to answer these charges. Sigismund and the German ambassadors opposed these measures on the ground that they would lead to an open schism. On the other hand the King of Aragon and the Duke of Milan encouraged the council in its position. The decree of the minority was declared null and void, and the election of the Patriarch of Alexandria to the college of cardinals was pronounced invalid. Failing to heed the commands of the council, Eugenius IV was declared guilty of contumacy on 1st October.

Undismayed, Eugenius IV accepted the challenge of the council, and on 18th September issued a bull dissolving it.[1] The bull was signed by eight cardinals and gave a history of the quarrel over the place of holding a conference with the Greeks. He asserted that a few turbulent spirits in the council, tools of the King of Aragon and the Duke of Milan, actuated by personal ambition, in control of the crowd of lower clergy, under the specious name of reformation, resisted the authority of the Pope. Hence for the purpose of preventing further scandals of the Church, he transferred the council to Ferrara to deal with the Greeks. The council on 12th October annulled the bull on the ground of the superiority of a general council to the Pope, and forbade all under penalty of excommunication to attend the council at Ferrara. Unless the Pope made amends for his acts within four months, the council threatened him with deposition from office.

Once more the issue was clearly drawn between Papal and conciliar power. The Pope had already won a signal victory and the majority of European princes were sympathetic. Besides the Greeks had finally decided to treat with the Pope rather than with the Council of Basel.[2] Sigismund still hoping for reformation from the council, and needing its assistance in dealing with the Bohemians, remained neutral in the controversy until his death 9th December, 1437. In another bull on 20th December, the Pope announced that the council had been transferred to Ferrara. After an eloquent speech breathing the true spirit of Christian statesmanship, Cesarini pointed out the evils that would follow another schism, mentioned its ill effects on the union with the Greeks and missionary work among the Mohammedans, and begged the council to take steps for peace with the Pope before it was too late. But his words of wisdom fell on deaf ears. The leaders of the reform party were resolved on war to the bitter end, and prepared a ponderous reply to Cesarini, who so ardently longed for peace and reformation. The noble cardinal saw all his fondest hopes blasted. The movement for the regeneration of the Church, which he had so much to do in inaugurating, had passed beyond his control into a dangerous revolution against the Papacy. Heart-broken, he confessed his failure to check the anarchy and discord, left Basel on 9th January, 1438, and went to Florence.

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[1] Mansi, xxix, 166; Haller, i, 141.

[2] Creighton, ii, 306.

The able and learned Nicholas of Cusa and other distinguished theologians at this time also separated themselves and openly espoused the cause of the Pope. Nicholas of Cusa, like Cesarini, had been a champion of the council so long as it laboured for the reformation, peace and unity of the Church, but when it was carried away by obstinate opposition to the Papacy, even to the point of threatening a new schism, and to the complete neglect of the primary objects for which it was called, he considered himself bound to abandon it in order to avoid the impending calamity.[1]

Cardinal d'Allemand took his place as president of the council, which on 24th January, 1438, suspended Eugenius IV from office, declared all his acts null and void, and asserted that meanwhile the administration of the Papacy devolved upon the council.[2] With the exception of the King of Aragon and the Dukes of Milan and Savoy, all the rulers of Europe sided with the Pope. Assuming to act for the entire Church, the council preferred 150 grave charges against the Pope to justify his suspension. He had claimed power over a general council with the right to dissolve it on his own motion, and branded all who did not agree with him, heretics. When he recognized the legitimacy of the council he had convicted himself of error. He had called a new council, hence he was a schismatic, and a lapsed heretic. Many members of the Papal party now left the council and went to Ferrara. The chairs of the absent bishops were filled with relics—very curious substitutes!—but there was one advantage: they could not vote!

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[1] Pastor, i, 314.

[2] Mansi, xxix, 159.

On 16th May, 1439, the Council of Basel passed three decrees asserting the supremacy of the general council over the Pope in matters pertaining to faith.[1] The climax came on 25th June, 1439, when the council took the final step against Pope Eugenius IV; it "removed, deposed, deprived and cast him down". It called him all the wicked names in the ecclesiastical dictionary of the day—simoniac, perjurer, liar, schismatic, heretic, anti-Christ, and disturber of the peace of the Church. All Christians were released from allegiance to him. All his acts were nullified. At this session only seven bishops and about 400 lower clergy were present and Cardinal d'Allemand of Arles presided. The Pope forthwith returned the compliments and called the council "a horde of robbers" and "an assembly of devils". The council informed the whole world of its action on 2nd July, 1439,[2] and in August John of Segovia wrote his *De tribus veritatibus* to urge a crusade against the deposed Pontiff as a heretic.[3] On 30th October a commission of thirty-two members was appointed to elect a new Pope and the Duke of Savoy was chosen as Felix V.[4] Accompanied by his two sons, he entered Basel and was crowned by Cardinal d'Allemand with a tiara that cost 20,000 crowns. He had the support of Savoy, a few German princes, Aragon, and the universities of Paris, Vienna, Cologne, Erfurt, and Cracow. He offered his daughter to Frederick III with a dowry of 200,000 ducats, in return for his support, but it was refused. The council voted him a tenth, but it was never collected. Felix V was a weak anti-Pope and in 1443 courteously revoked his bulls cursing Eugenius IV, then abdicated, and was made cardinal and apostolic vicar over Savoy and the other regions of his obedience. Three of his cardinals were given seats at Rome and d'Allemand was forgiven. Felix V was the last anti-Pope. The council, reduced to a handful, adjourned to Lausanne, and finally voted to recognize the successor of Eugenius IV, Nicholas V.[5] Such was the inglorious ending of the great Council of Basel.

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[1] Haller, i, 28.

[2] Mansi, xxix, 178; *Mon. Con.*, iii, 33.

[3] Haller, i, 28, gives an excellent digest of this tract.

[4] Mauger, *D. Wahl Amadeus von Savoyen zum Papste*, Marburg, 1901.

[5] Labbaeus, xii, 663, 665.

133. *The Council of Ferrara*

While these things were transpiring at Basel, the Council of Ferrara, which by the bull of Eugenius IV on 18th September, 1437, was pronounced a continuation of the Council of Basel, was convening to solve the problem of union with the Greeks. The Council of Ferrara was formally opened on 5th January, 1438, by Cardinal Albergati as Papal legate. The attendance was not large, but encouraging. Its first act on 10th January was to confirm the transferrence of the council from Basel to Ferrara, and to annul all decrees at Basel since the Pope's bull had been issued. The Pope reached the council on 27th January and took over the presidency. On 8th February he urged the council to suppress the rebels at Basel and to begin the work of union with the Greeks. A bull was issued on 15th February annulling the proceedings of the Council of Basel and excommunicating all those who within thirty days did not desert it.

The Greek Emperor, John Palæologus, his brother, the Patriarch, and twenty-two bishops set sail for Italy on 24th November, 1437, and reached Venice on 8th February, where they received a magnificent reception by the Doge and citizens. After tarrying twenty days there, to dicker with the Council of Basel, they set sail for Ferrara and were greeted by the Pope on 7th March with dignity and respect. The Emperor had arrived three days earlier, was embraced by the Pope in the courtyard of his palace, was requested not to kneel, but was permitted to kiss the Pontiff's hand, and then was given a seat on the Pope's left for a friendly visit. The Patriarch, on the contrary, was requested to kiss the Pope's foot on his arrival, but he stubbornly refused to do it, saying: "I determined, if the Pope were older than I, to treat him as a father; if of the same age, as a brother; if younger as a son." "If the Pope be the successor of Peter," said the Patriarch, "we are the successors of the other apostles. Did they kiss Peter's foot?" and he threatened to return home. After a day's bickering, the Pope waived his right, and the formal meeting occurred, the Patriarch kissing the Pope's cheek as an equal.

The next question before the council, which proved to be a very knotty one, related to the arrangement of the seats in the council for the Greeks. Cesarini suggested that the Greeks sit on one side of the cathedral and the Latins on the other with the Pope between them as the connecting link. The Greeks bluntly replied that they were not looking for such a link, but if one was needed their own leaders would supply it. The real contest was one for prestige and recognized authority. The Greeks were at some disadvantage because they were the Pope's guests and he was paying all their bills. A compromise over the arrangement of the seats was finally reached; the Greeks were to sit on one side, the Latins on the other; the Pope's chair was the highest and nearest the altar, then came the seat for the Emperor of the West, on the Pope's right, on his left the place for the Eastern Emperor, and behind him was the Patriarch. To allow all the Christian princes to attend, it was agreed on 9th April in a solemn decree read in both Latin and Greek, that an adjournment of four months should be taken. The four most important differences to be discussed were (1) the procession of the Holy Ghost; (2) leavened and unleavened bread in the Eucharist; (3) purgatory, and (4) Papal supremacy. In the interval a commission of ten selected from each side was named to begin the discussion of the questions at issue. The leaders on the two sides were Cardinal Cesarini and the Bishop of Ephesus. This unofficial conference began on 4th June. The first difference discussed was that of purgatory and the debate lasted until 17th July. As a result the two parties saw that they were not so far apart after all, and furthermore that there were serious divisions of opinion among the Greeks themselves. Nothing further was done in the commission during the remainder of the four months' delay. Since the princes did not arrive at the specified period for resuming the council, the delay was continued. Meanwhile the plague broke out in Ferrara, the members of the council fled until of the 150 prelates in attendance at the first session, only five cardinals and fifty bishops remained.

The second session was held on 8th October in the Papal chapel, and it was agreed that the two parties should vote separately on all matters. The fundamental difference, namely, the double procession of the Holy Ghost, was then taken up. Each side chose six disputants, the speeches were numerous, and the arguments were long and involved, the debate dragged on through October and November, and no agreement was in sight, when the Pope persuaded the Eastern Emperor to agree to transfer the council from Ferrara to Florence on 10th January, 1439. The occasion for this action was the pestilence, so the Pope reported, but the real reason was the difficulty of financing the council at Ferrara.

134. *The Council at Florence*

On 26th February, 1439, the discussions on the procession of the Holy Ghost were resumed in the Papal palace at Florence, but confined to forty members from each side. It was agreed to hold public disputations three times a week for at least three hours. Smaller committees were also appointed by each side to consider the question of union. The theological duel continued from day to day, until both sides were worn out by the endless wrangling. Proposals and counter-proposals were drawn up, messages passed between the Emperor and Pope like a shuttle-cock, and a mass of documents was offered by each party to prove the truth of its position. At last, on 3rd June, the Greeks were brought to admit that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son as one cause and one substance, and proceeds through the Son as the same nature and the same substance. With that victory assured to the Latins, the Pope promised to send military and naval forces to Constantinople, and to arouse Western Christendom in a crusade in defence of the Greeks against the Mohammedans. The Patriarch of Constantinople died on 10th June, and the cause of union was aided by a paper signed before his death acknowledging the supremacy of the Roman Church, and approving of union. Minor differences such as the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist, purgatory, the words used in consecration and Papal primacy were next taken up, and a satisfactory agreement arrived at. After some serious controversy, the Greeks submitted to the following version of Papal supremacy: "We recognize the Pope as sovereign Pontiff vicegerant and vicar of Christ, shepherd and teacher of all Christians, ruler of the Church of God, saving the privileges and rights of the patriarchs of the East."

A committee of twelve was appointed to draw up the decree of union on the basis of the conclusion reached, and after eight days labour, finished it on 4th July, and the next day it was signed by 115 Latin prelates and abbots, and 33 Greek ecclesiastics, some of the latter under pressure and persuasion, however. The decrees were published on 6th July, and the act of union was celebrated by mass, hymns of praise, and general rejoicing. Four duplicates of the decree on union were made to be sent to the princes of Christendom. This act contained the following terms of agreement:—

1. The Latin statement of the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Ghost was accepted.
2. The use of either leavened or unleavened bread in the Eucharist was permitted.
3. The two views about purgatory were allowed.
4. The Roman Pope was recognized as the head of Christendom.

The whole affair was a memorable victory for the Pope, and did much to strengthen his position in Western Europe. On 20th July, the Greek prelates began to leave Florence, although the Eastern Emperor did not depart until 26th August.

A treaty was drawn up between the Pope and the Eastern Emperor in which it was agreed:—

1. That the Pope should send all the Greeks home in a comfortable manner at his own expense.
2. That the Pope should supply annually two galleys and 300 soldiers for the defence of Constantinople.
3. That all ships proceeding to the Holy Land should stop at Constantinople first.
4. That in the event of dire need, the Pope should supply twenty galleys for six months or ten for a year.
5. That the Pope should use his influence with the western princes to induce them to aid the Greek Emperor against the Mohammedan Turks.

It remained to be seen whether the Greeks at home would accept the results of the union. "Have you won a triumph over the Latins?" was eagerly asked of the returning prelates. "We have made a satisfactory compromise" was the reply. The Greeks were keenly disappointed, however, and popular opposition to the act of union immediately arose. Although the Pope sent the 300 troops and the two galleys promised, the West organized no great crusade against the Turks, and this failure incited the people still further. In 1443 the three

Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria issued an encyclical letter condemning the Council of Florence as a council of robbers and pronounced the Patriarch of Constantinople a matricide and a heretic. Within ten years, Constantinople was in the hands of the hated Turks.

135. *Papacy recovered its power and prestige*

The Pope and his council had won a paper victory over the Greeks, but not in reality, for the Greek Church continued its independence. Nevertheless it was a gain of considerable consequence to bring the two Churches, with their different civilizations and schools of thought together for a sifting discussion. The West and particularly Italy was blessed by the cultural contact. When the Mohammedans over-ran the Eastern Empire many of the Greek scholars found a congenial home in Italy, and played no small rôle in the Renaissance. The greatest result of the attempt at union with the Greeks was to restore the ruined prestige of the Papacy. Europe was profoundly impressed by the apparent victory of the Pope and gladly yielded to Eugenius IV the credit for having healed the great schism which had for so many centuries divided the Western from the Eastern Church. The Pope was shrewd enough to make the most of his success and in tones of exultation informed the princes of Christendom of the difficulties of the task, of the zeal with which he persisted in the holy cause, and of the triumph which crowned his efforts.[1] All Europe rejoiced in the new honour that had come to Rome and in their joy and gratification forgot the Council of Basel as well as its plans for the reformation of the Church. The Italians in particular regarded the union as a racial triumph and an opportunity to recover their hold on the leadership of the Church, which the other European nations had threatened for so many years with destruction, and consequently gladly renewed their allegiance to the Pope. The victory which crowned Papal diplomacy in dealing with the Greeks, and in reconciling the Armenians to the Roman Church, which was also announced to Europe in 1439, was the most important factor in restoring Papal power on its old foundations.[2] In

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[1] Raynaldus, 1439, § 9.

[2] Pastor, i, 317; Theiner, *Mon. Slavor.*, i, 381.

1443 a union with a portion of the Jacobites followed.[1] In 1443 a Papal bull announced that the Nestorians and the Maronites had affiliated with Rome.[2]

Apart from its work in attempting to bring about an understanding with the Greeks, the Papal council of Ferrara-Florence had no special significance. Its members were nearly all Italians, except of course the Greek contingent, and the powers of Europe took no part in it. Its authority did not extend beyond the Roman communion. It gave no thought to the great work of reformation. Indeed it was little more than a convenient vehicle through which the Roman Pontiff found it expedient to carry on his diplomatic proceedings with the representatives of the Greek Church. It did succeed in making a loud noise in Europe and thus attracted the eyes of Europe away from the Council of Basel to itself.

The Pope hastened to announce to Christendom the glad tidings of the reunion of all Christendom under his sway, and ordered prayers and processions for a suitable celebration. On the surface of course it appeared to the Papal party as if a permanent world-wide victory had been won. It was impossible to see at the time that the triumph was on paper. An œcumenical council had pronounced the Pope to be the head of the Universal Church, with his power derived not from the will of the members of the Church, but from Christ immediately, whose vicar he was; and likewise to be the father and teacher of the Church to whom all owed obedience. The publication of this decision became the essential foundation of the doctrine of the primacy, and was a mortal blow at the whole conciliar theory.[3]

136. *Results of the Council of Basel*

The results of the Council of Basel may be summed up as follows:—

1. A compromise was made with the Bohemian heretics and they were once more brought within the fold of the Roman Church.

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[1] Hefele, vii, 796; Pichler, *Kirch. Trennung*, ii, 493.

[2] Raynaldus, 1445, n. 21–2. The council had been removed to Rome in 1444, where two sessions were held to deal with union with the Oriental Christians. Before the death of Eugenius IV, the East appeared to be almost entirely united with Rome. See Pastor, i, 324–5.

[3] Hergenröther, II, i, 201; Hefele, vii, 741; Pastor, i, 317.

2. Some good wholesome reforms were enacted, but they fell far short of what was both needed and expected by the Church, and furthermore because of the ending of the council they proved ineffectual. In the correction of ecclesiastical abuses the Council of Basel could not be pronounced a success. Individual selfishness and hostility to the Pope defeated the aspirations and good intentions for reformation and thus lost to the council its greatest opportunity for genuine usefulness. To many in Europe it now became clear that reformation could not come through a general council, and thus the way was paved directly for the Protestant Revolt.

3. The old struggle between the theory of conciliar control and the assertion of Papal absolutism was revived at the very outset of the council, and paralleled and coloured all its proceedings. In 1434 the council seemed to have made good its pretensions to supremacy, but the triumph was only temporary, and in the end it met with overwhelming disaster. Had the Church at that time succeeded in organizing itself on a parliamentary basis, like that developing in France and England, it is highly probable that the Church would have been really reformed and modernized to meet the new conditions and demands confronting it, and thus the disastrous schism which began in less than a century would have been averted. But the effort to revolutionize the constitution of the Church met with complete failure.

4. By the thirteenth century the Pontifical power had attained the maximum of its development. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, on the contrary, its decline was sensible and notable. Great Popes during that period were scarce and the Church was overwhelmed with a series of disasters. The Papacy escaped from the Babylonian Captivity only to fall into the Great Schism. The attempted cure of the Schism at the Council of Pisa, which gave the Church three heads, was worse than the disease. The most significant thing of the era was the weakening of the powers of the Pope in relation to the Christian princes and to the Church itself. The decadence of the Medieval Church was so pronounced that the fact could not be questioned.[1] The Roman Church was in bitter strife with itself and with the world.[2] The Papacy for the first few

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[1] Lavisse and Rambaud, vol. 3, 312, 317, 343.

[2] Flathe, *Gesch. des Vorläufer der Reformation*, Leipzig, 1835–6.

years of the council's activity seemed to suffer a curtailment of prerogative and a definite subordination to the council's will, but in the end the Papacy emerged with wider pretensions, a more extended territorial jurisdiction, and a more pronounced increase of power than had been exercised for several centuries. Theoretically at least the Greek Church had acknowledged the primacy of Rome once more.

Protestant historians are quite generally disposed to eulogize the Council of Basel as of great authority and historical significance, chiefly because of its opposition to Papal absolutism and its attempt to introduce the system of parliamentary government into the Church. Anglican authorities are disposed to attach but little authority to it. The Roman Catholic historians universally discredit it on account of its revolutionary attempts to revise the constitution of the Church and to subordinate Papal authority to its own will. In historical importance it ranks much lower than the Council of Constance, because it committed suicide by its loose methods of organization, by permitting the lower clergy to control its proceedings, by failing to work out a system of thoroughgoing reforms, by its immoderate measures against the head of the Church, by attempting to create a schism in electing an anti-Pope, and by the confusions and quarrels which characterized its closing years.

137. *General results of the conciliar period*

If one makes a careful survey of the whole conciliar period, lasting for the greater part of half a century, in order carefully to assess the possibilities on the one hand, and the positive accomplishments on the other, the result is a keen disappointment for the following reasons:—

1. The Papacy was unified and its power increased.

2. The conciliar theory was defeated by the conservative forces in the Church.

3. The reformation, attempted on a grand scale, dwindled down to a few comparatively inadequate measures, and even those were not rigidly enforced.

4. Wiclif was denounced, Huss and Jerome were burned, but in the end the heresy they represented was compromised with.

5. The general discussions and criticism both within and without the Church by the liberal, progressive, reform party struck at the very roots of the Papal system and the medieval dogma. Demands were made which, when not satisfied by the general councils, precipitated the Protestant movement.

6. The Church lost its last great opportunity to retain and preserve the unity of Christendom under one organization; to purify the Church so thoroughly that it could perform its useful mission in the world; to modify its teachings and doctrines as well as its constitution to meet the new needs of a new civilization that was rapidly creeping over Europe; and to summon to its service for efficient leadership men of brains, pure hearts, a true spiritual vision, high Christian ideas, a lofty conception of the real mission of the Church to serve and save men, and executive and administrative ability. Instead, a line of Popes succeeded to the Papacy, who were sadly deficient in most of these requisite qualifications.

7. Meanwhile other forces such as the national states and independent princes, the spread of the Renaissance, the economic changes creeping over Europe, the social stirrings of the lower classes in most of the countries, the inventions, particularly that of printing, and the religious reformers who were appearing everywhere in the Church and urging radical measures, all worked together to bring on the sixteenth century revolution.

PART IV

THE RENAISSANCE AND THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

CHAPTER XX

THE RENAISSANCE AND THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH: I. IN ITALY

138. *Scope and historical significance*

THE Renaissance, in its chronological scope, its meaning, and its historical significance, has been variously interpreted. The old view, found in practically all accounts until the middle of the nineteenth century, asserted that with the barbarian invasions learning disappeared throughout the Roman Empire; that for a period of a thousand years from the fifth to the fifteenth century, 476 and 1453 are the dates usually given, Europe passed through the Middle Ages, which separated ancient and modern times; and that in the fifteenth century the discovery of some ancient manuscripts and the influx of Greek scholars after the fall of Constantinople produced a sudden revival of interest in antiquity and a consequent transformation from the dark ages to modern civilization. A line showing this conception would represent a sudden decline in the fifth century, then a low level for ten centuries, and a sudden rise in the fifteenth century.

The new view of the Renaissance, which has resulted from recent historical research, goes back at least to the second century of the Christian era to point out the causes and forces which led to the decline of the Greco-Roman civilization, and shows that that decay was not due wholly to the barbarian invasion, as a sudden overwhelming cataclysm, but was the gradual result of a great many explainable causes inherent in the social, political, religious, economic, and intellectual life of the Roman Empire. The lowest point in this downward movement, which began as early as the second century, was reached in the sixth and seventh century, when Gregory of Tours (d. 595) lamented that "the study of letters had perished", Boethius (d. 525) mourned "Woe to me! for learning is perished off the face of the earth", and Gregory the Great (d. 604), the head of the Latin Church, denounced all learning as sinful. From that period onward there was a long upward slope, in a series of waves, each one of which was a little higher than the preceding one. This revival was conspicuous in the eighth century under Charles the Great; became noticeable in the tenth century under Otto the Great; was very pronounced in many fields as a result of the crusades; revealed itself in the rebirth of art in its various forms; was powerfully stimulated by the rise of schools and universities; was materially assisted by the formation of national states, by the growth of free cities, and by the revival of Roman law; found expression in various forms of heresy; and finally culminated in the fifteenth century in the age of inventions, discoveries, scientific methods, humanism and the Reformation. A line representing this view would resemble a broad angle with the shorter arm extending downward from the second to the seventh century, and the longer arm slanting upward from the seventh to the fifteenth century.

The evolution of modern Europe, broadly speaking, has been continuous, although progression has been checked at times by retrogression. Since the seventh century, there has not been a century in which some conspicuous contribution was not made towards the attainments of present civilization. Hence the true historical perspective between the summits of ancient and modern times does not join them by a long low stretch of a thousand years, with mankind stationary, wasting its strength in warfare and monastic contemplation and yielding implicit obedience to the medieval Church, but shows a downward slope for five centuries followed by a long upward grade, both of which movements are necessary to explain the civilization of to-day. The forces at work during the so-called Middle Ages—a term which usage still compels one to employ—were not alone religious and political, but also educational, economic, and social, which have been all too commonly neglected. The term Renaissance, or Renascence, therefore, represents a well-known but indefinite space of time, which marks the transition from that period of history called the Middle Ages to that which is called modern. No definite dates can be assigned either to its beginning or to its ending.

A second divergence of opinion has grown out of the interpretation of the meaning and scope of the Renaissance. Those who use it in the narrowest sense would confine it to that new enthusiasm for classical literature, learning, and art, which sprang up in Italy at the close of the Middle Ages and produced a new culture for Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Some of the advocates of this conception of the Renaissance even seek to limit it to the "Revival of Learning", while others speak of it as the re-birth of classical art. These erroneous views of the Renaissance are found in the older treatises, and have been perpetuated by so many of our text-books on European history that large numbers of intelligent people still hold them.

In sharp contrast to this contracted conception of the Renaissance, scholars to-day are accustomed to use the term in the broadest sense as a many-sided development of man in all his relations—intellectual, political, social, economic, and moral—as an evolution in European civilization, which marked the transition from the medieval to the modern conception of the State, of society, of literature, of education, of art, of philosophy, and of the physical universe—and as the entrance of the peoples of Western Europe upon an era of a fuller self-consciousness; as a wider outlook over the past, present and future; as a saner understanding of the significance of life; and as a freer exercise of faculties, than had characterized the medieval period. Symonds calls the Renaissance "the whole transition from the middle Ages to the modern world" and "the history of the attainment of self-conscious freedom to the human spirit manifested in the European races". This interpretation of the Renaissance not only points out the positive forces of progress which were giving the European peoples a new civilization, but also implies the decline of those great fabrics such as the Medieval Church, the Holy Roman Empire, and feudalism. New theories of the Church, the State, and Society, which would have been pronounced as wildly visionary, or impious, by the medieval mind, were introduced gradually, and not by any abrupt break with the Middle Ages.

139. *The Revival of Learning*

The Revival of Learning was merely a part of the larger movement called the Renaissance—"a function of that vital energy, an organ of that mental evolution, which brought into existence the modern world, with its new conceptions of philosophy and religion, its awakened arts and sciences, its firmer grasp on the realities of human nature and the world, its manifold inventions and discoveries, its altered political systems, its expansive and progressive forces."[1] Only indirectly did it influence those larger problems of the Renaissance—the decay of those gigantic organizations, Church and Empire, which dominated the Middle Ages both as ideas and realities; the rise of national states with their own languages and literatures; the undermining of feudalism throughout Europe; the invention and practical use of paper, printing, gunpowder, and the mariner's compass; the navigation of the seas and the discovery of new continents and unknown peoples; the application of the scientific method of investigation; and the substitution of the Copernican conception of the universe for the old Ptolemaic theory. The discerning student of the Middle Ages sees that Europe had recovered from the demoralizing confusion resulting from the break-up of the Roman Empire, that the Christianized and Latinized Teutonic tribes were consciously creating modern nationalities willing, at least in part, to rule Europe on the basis of a co-operative federation; and that revolutionary theories of Church and State were making a bold attack upon the Holy Roman Empire and the Roman Church as champions of universal monarchy and indivisable Christendom. The significant conflict between Philip IV of France and Pope Boniface VIII, the new political science of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the numerous attacks made on the Papal office, and the influence of these progressive forces in the great reform councils, all point unmistakably to the dawn of a new era in the civilization of Europe. To this whole period and process of transition, of discussion, of fusion of the old and the new, of preparation, of tentative reassessment of intellectual, political, social and religious values, is given the name Renaissance. The contribution of the Revival of Learning to this movement was to rediscover the classic past, to point out the continuity and unity of history; to hold up for emulation the old masterpieces of literature, philosophy, and art; to provoke inquiry and encourage criticism; to shatter the narrow and bigoted intellectual barriers set by medieval orthodoxy; and to inspire in men a self-consciousness in their ability to secure mental and spiritual freedom.

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[1] Symonds, "Renaissance," in *Encyc. Brit.*, xxiii, 83.

Humanism, a term frequently used in connection with the Renaissance, describes that pronounced bias which the Renaissance set free as a result of the intimate study of the ancient civilization—that conscious human self-esteem so characteristic of the fifteenth and sixteenth century—that endeavour of man to reconstruct his life in its many bearings as a free being, unhampered by the despotism of theology or politics. In this process of emancipation, he was powerfully assisted by the Greek and Roman literature, the *litteræ humaniores*, which spoke for man rather than for divinity. The term was employed mostly north of the Alps and its champions were called the humanists.

In the truest sense, then, the Renaissance included both the Revival of Learning and humanism and was that comprehensive movement of the European intellect, judgment, and will toward self-conscious freedom, toward a restatement of the natural rights of the reason and the senses, toward the investigation and mastery of this planet as the home of man, and toward the creation of new theories for the life of both individuals and groups of individuals in political and ecclesiastical organizations. The Renaissance was in reality an evolution rather than a revival.

140. *Meaning of the Renaissance*

As commonly used by scholars to-day the Renaissance, in its broadest signification, means that new civilization which gradually displaced medieval civilization. Just as Christianity brought into the Greco-Roman world a new and higher civilization, which, after centuries of conflict and compromise, produced a civilization that was an amalgamation of classical, Germanic and Christian forces to dominate the Middle Ages, so medieval civilization in turn was transformed into modern civilization. The Renaissance includes both the causes and the processes, as well as the results, of that evolution. Although evidences and signs of the change are not lacking in previous centuries, still the movement does not become plain and unmistakable in its meaning until the fourteenth century and does not become a widespread and effective force in Europe until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It must never be forgotten, however, that the Middle Ages had a high and useful civilization of its own, but it was ecclesiastical, imperial, feudal, and strictly self-limited. Indeed it was so very different from our own life to-day that we are entirely too prone to pass sweeping condemnation upon it. The period of the Renaissance, in sharp contrast to the medieval epoch, was secular, scientific, rationalistic and, like antiquity, eager to conquer the world for man. Just as Christianity appropriated much that was good in the old Greco-Roman world, so the Renaissance did not wholly destroy or supplant medieval civilization. In fact much of both the good and the bad in the Middle Ages has survived in the world until the present time. Medieval Christianity was reformed and modified, but not cast off. Its lessons of self-restraint, its laws of conduct and its rites and ceremonies are still found useful to-day. The flower of the feudal system, chivalry, has powerfully affected modern society. The best cultural creations of the period—the universities, the vernacular languages and literatures, the Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals and secular buildings, the sculpture of Niccola and Andrea Pisano, the painting of Cimabue and Giotto—all have their place in our modern civilization.

The Renaissance means that man first discovered himself with a consciousness of his rights and opportunities; then he discovered his relationship to his fellow man of the past as well as of his own day and realized a new sense of both duty and obligation to him more fully than ever before ; and finally he began to comprehend rationally the great physical universe about him, with its unlimited fields of possibility in invention, investigation, and discovery. In a revolt against asceticism scholasticism, and provincialism, the medieval man was gradually transformed into the modern man—a real man in a real world. The tap-root of the Renaissance was individualism. A typical man of the Middle Ages may be seen in St Bernard, as Symonds introduces him to us, on the beautiful shores of Lake Geneva. Riding along on his bony white mule, utterly enveloped in a monk's cowl, with his head bent down almost to the animal's neck, dead to the throbbing world about him, his heart, mind, and soul were centred with the utmost seriousness upon the terrors of sin, the awful need of repentance, and the terrific dread of death and judgment. A spring day in all its matchless glory and beauty spread over the valleys and mountains of Switzerland. But this self-centred monk of the Middle Ages noticed neither the azure blue of the waters nor the ripple of the brooks, nor the luxuriance of the vines nor the radiance of the mountains with their robe of sunshine and snow. Nor heard he the singing of birds, nor saw the playful squirrels and rabbits, nor smelled the fragrance of countless mountain roses and myriads of springtime flowers. To all these he was oblivious. To him, the austere ascetic, what was beauty? A snare, a curse! What was pleasure? A sin to damn body and soul! What was the world? A fleeting and disappointing show! What was man? A fallen and lost creature! Death was the only certainty. Ignorance was pleasing to God as a proof of faith and submission. Self-denial and bodily mortification were the only safe rules in life pointing to certain salvation and joy everlasting hereafter. Nothing else in life was worth while.

In contrast look at Petrarch, who in 1335, made the arduous ascent of Mount Ventaux in France for the pure joy of the experience. He gloried in the good things of the earth. He loved the fields, and flowers, the hills and brooks, the birds and animals, the changing skies with sunshine, rain and thunder. He lived a wholesome, joyous normal life. His creed of life marks a new type of a man, a modern man. He exalted Heavenly things by stressing things terrestrial. This was a reversal of the medieval point of view.

Battista Alberti (d. 1472) asserted that the sight of a lovely landscape had more than once cured him of illness.[1]

The Renaissance changed this whole point of view. It tore to shreds that thick dark sombre veil which had been drawn between man and the world in which he lived. It flashed the light of reason and revelation into the darkened spots of man's own nature. It aroused his ambition to conquer the world—sent him across the trackless deep to discover the new world and to circumnavigate the earth—led him to study the heavens above and there discover the Copernican system. It beckoned Galileo into the great cathedral of Pisa to experiment with his giant pendulum and thereby prove the rotundity and rotation of the earth. It enticed Harvey to brave countless superstitions in discovering the circulation of the blood. It enabled Vesalius to risk death at the stake as a heretic for the sake of giving to the world the science of anatomy as a result of a scientific study of the human body through dissection. It created a new theory of history by proclaiming the unity and brotherhood of man through all ages and in all parts of the world. It opened up to the man of the Middle Ages ancient learning and knowledge in a thousand different fields. It produced a revolution in religion. It gave a fresh inspiration to art. The meaningless formalism of medieval art disappeared, and art became real, genuine, natural, and representative of the highest and best in man. The result was seen in the powerful masterpieces of painting and sculpture. It gave the world those matchless Gothic chapels, monasteries, cathedrals, palaces, and civic buildings which are still the pride and glory of the cities fortunate enough to possess them, and which have been copied all over the earth. It created those dreams in rock during the later Renaissance period, when the mania for the beautiful became as conscious and as conspicuous as the crusade for classical learning. It made man the proprietor of the earth with a full realization of his ownership and guardianship. The recluse became the observing citizen, ambitious to live a larger and more useful life. A cosmopolitan spirit was born. Many men in many corners of Europe were exclaiming with Dante: "My home is the world."[1]

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[1] Geiger-Burckhardt, i, 152; ii, 18 sqq.

141. *Causes of the Renaissance*

The forces and causes which produced the Renaissance and gradually focussed it into a powerful movement, which helped to undermine the power of the Medieval Church, which left an indelible impress on the civilization of Europe, and whose results have covered the world, may be stated somewhat categorically:—

1. The relatively superior character of Greek and Roman civilization, which never died out in Europe but persisted more or less strongly throughout the whole of the Middle Ages, and which produced a distinct revival of interest in the fifteenth century. Europe was covered with remains of the age of

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[1] Burckhardt, i, 145.

Greece and Rome and many more were recovered after the fourteenth century. It was in Italian cities in close touch with Rome and in Rome itself that the Renaissance had its conspicuous beginnings.

2. Christianity, which materially modified and improved Greco-Roman civilization in its weakest spots, which consciously utilized Greco-Roman culture and institutional life, which built up in Western Europe an organization and a system of canon law, that were the counterparts of the Roman Empire and the Roman law; which gave birth to scholastic philosophy with its marvellous intellectual activity, trained the minds of the best men in Europe to understand and to advance the spirit of the Renaissance in its various ramifications. Furthermore the Medieval Church not only preserved and utilized Roman temples and other edifices but also kept alive paganism by fathering festivals and saint worship based on pagan practices.

3. The Germanic invasions of the Roman Empire brought these fresh, vigorous groups of people under the influence of both the classical ideals and of Christianity and gradually made them the champions of both. Through them the Renaissance was carried from its birth-place in Italy over the Alps and spread throughout Europe. The action of Theodorus in advising his Goths to give up barbarism and accept Roman usages was typical.

4. The foresight and labours of such mighty medieval leaders and rulers as Alfred the Great, Charles the Great, and Otto the Great, in co-operation with the able scholars, like Einhard, Widikund of Corvey and Adam of Bremen, whose services they were able to command, kept alive the embers of classical civilization and Christian learning during the period of the so-called dark ages.[1]

5. Monasticism with its local units located in every populous spot in Europe, attracting into the cloisters much of the best blood and keenest brains of succeeding generations for centuries, kept the torch of classical knowledge burning, when it had all but died out among the masses of the people, and powerfully assisted in tiding over the period of decline until the dawn of the Renaissance.

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[1] Loserth, 618.

6. The conquest of Spain by the Arabs and Jews founded a new centre of learning in Western Europe and drew to it from many Christian lands students through whom Oriental and Greek civilization was reintroduced into the various centres of intellectual activity.

7. The crusades, which covered a period of two centuries from the eleventh to the thirteenth, and kept Western Europe in more or less close touch with the Near East, not only brought back a knowledge of the learning, science, religion, geography, products, institutions, and peoples of the East, but also stimulated a co-operative spirit, a new loyalty to the Roman Church, and an intense intellectual activity throughout the West among various classes of people.[1]

8. The organization of monastic, cathedral and court schools; the rise of the universities; and the creation of professional schools of law, theology, and medicine, all assisted in one way or another in the emancipation from medieval limitations, taught men to think clearly and independently about the inferiority of their own age, gave them the new message of antiquity, ushered in the new era of criticism and inquiry, which opened up to man the vision of a new universe. A class of educated laymen appeared who were not willing to be circumscribed in their thinking by the Church and who began to speak their own convictions boldly.

9. The rise of free cities, with free citizens, who were masters of their own political destiny, who built up independent fortunes through trade and business and who became patrons of art and culture, supplied so many centres of the new propagandism. It was in the city republics of Italy that the Renaissance made its first notable conquests.

10. Heresy, championed by individuals and groups, despite the attempts of the Church to crush it out wherever it dared to appear, aroused criticism and provoked thought about the great ideals and institutions of the Middle Ages, and thus powerfully assisted in promoting the new era of intellectual independence. During the period from Boniface VIII to the Council of Basel, hundreds of bold thinkers had the audacity to strike with their unerring weapons at the very foundations of the Papacy, the fundamental dogmas of the Medieval Church, and at the claims of the Universal Empire.

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[1] Owen, *Skeptics*, 72–96.

11. The appearance of national states like England, France and Spain, led by powerful, independent and wealthy monarchs, who had the support of most of the rich nobles and higher clergy, patronized the new arts, encouraged the new learning, and assisted the new spirit that was creeping over Europe. Without their aid the movement must have grown much more slowly.

12. The labours of many individual scholars from Dante to Erasmus, of a host of artists from Cimabue to Michael Angelo, of scientists from Gerbert and Roger Bacon to Galileo, gave a powerful impetus to the new civilization by defending it and popularizing it. The genius of invention and the spirit of discovery and exploration also awakened the eyes of a relatively blind world to its manifold wonders.

13. The social and economic changes from the twelfth century onward, which were gradually transforming the modes of living and association, which were completely revolutionizing trade, industry, and commerce, which were undermining feudalism and thus altering the whole fabric of society, which were giving birth to a powerful class of wealthy traders and merchants and to groups of free artisans, and which were building up new centres of population in various parts of Europe, released liberalizing and modernizing forces as potent allies of the Renaissance movement.

14. The weakening of Papal absolutism, as a result of the Avignon period, the Great Schism and the reform councils made it much easier to revive Greek and Roman ideals, to propagate new views of life, and to cultivate the scientific method of investigation.

15. The fall of Constantinople before the conquering Turks in 1453 drove many Greek scholars to the West, particularly to Italy, and thus added a new stimulus to the great mental advance which was already under headway, more particularly on its literary side.

16. The invention of printing, primarily a result of the Renaissance itself, became in turn a stimulating cause of its marvellous spread territorially and downward from the scholar to the common man, until the whole intellectual life of Europe was revolutionized.

17. The co-operation and patronage of the Popes encouraged scholars and artists to produce some of their most celebrated

masterpieces between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. Without the approbation and material support from this source, it is doubtful whether the movement would have flourished as it did. It was a fact of no slight significance that from Petrarch to Michael Angelo many of the leaders of the Renaissance were ecclesiastics and servants of the Church.

A survey of these causes will show that some of them were remote, others immediate; some direct, others indirect; all of them were positive and constructive; and they reflected the entire institutional development of Europe. They indicate the complexity of the Renaissance and in its content prove it to be, fundamentally, the gradual dawning of modern civilization.

No exact dates can be assigned for either the beginning or the end of the Renaissance. The indirect causes run back to Rome and Greece, while many of the direct causes lie buried in the manifold activities of the Middle Ages. As a distinct and discernible conscious movement, however, it appeared in the fourteenth century, when the awakened intelligence of man began to interest itself conspicuously in antiquity as a subject worthy of the most careful study and also in the world of human affairs.

142. *The Renaissance in Italy*

The place where the Renaissance began was in Italy, where there was the closest connection with the name, institutions and traditions of Rome, where the Latin tongue was still the language of the Church, the law, and the scholar—and where even the vernacular and the fundamental concepts of the people most closely resembled the Roman. Memories of the ancient civilization were more persistent in Italy than anywhere else in the west. Old Rome was still visible on every hand in her colossal remains and felt everywhere in art, names of cities, rivers, mountains, institutions and ideas. The Roman Empire was still alive, and although centred in Germany, also vaguely included Italy. Roman temples and palaces were still used as Christian churches, and homes of rulers. The indestructible city of Rome was still the capital of the Universal Church and of the Empire. The municipal council of Rome was believed to hold the place of the ancient senate. Roman law was first revived in Italian universities. Dante said: " The stones of the walls of Rome merit the veneration of all." The Italians were proud to boast that the history of Rome was the fountain source of their own history without any serious gaps. Many Italian noble families traced their ancestry back to Roman families.[1] This consciousness explains the fantastic and fanatical efforts of Crescentius, Arnold of Brescia, and Rienzi to revive the Roman Republic. Thus of all nations of the West, Italy was most emphatically the heir of Roman culture. Another important fact must also be kept in mind, namely, that, more than any other nation, the Italians had been in continuous touch with Greek and Oriental civilization. In the first place, from the time of Constantine's removal of his capital to Constantinople until the restoration of the Roman Empire in the West under Charles the Great, Italy was politically subject to the Eastern Empire. Secondly, through trade, travel, culture, and tradition an intimate relationship persisted throughout the whole of the Middle Ages. In addition there was more or less friendly ecclesiastical intercourse between the Greek and Roman Catholic Churches. Even the life of the Italian cities resembled the city life of the Greeks.[2] Through all these channels the Italians were affected in their civilization by Greek influences.

In Italy the way was prepared for leadership in the Renaissance by the commercial prosperity and wealth of a considerable number of free cities, in which existed a leisured class whose members could devote themselves to the problems of self-government, to the patronage of the fine arts, and to the encouragement of literature and philosophy. Feudalism had never struck its roots very deeply into Italian soil and in consequence it was early and easily abolished by the cities. The political and mental activity of the citizens of the free cities supplied both the fertile soil and the favourable atmosphere for a tremendous forward movement in civilization. The Italians of the fourteenth century, more precocious and progressive than any other European people, were ripe for this emancipation of an intelligence enslaved by medievalism.

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[1] The Cornoro from Cornelius, the Masimi from Fabius Maximus, the Barbi of Venice from the Ahenobarbi.

[2] Lavisse and Rambaud, iii, 545.

The Italian mind had never been so completely captivated as elsewhere by the infallible method of scholastic thought, hence mental freedom and an interest in life's sterner realities predominated there. Law and medicine, rather than pure dialectics and dogma, flourished in Italian universities. The critical sense and the scientific point of view made reason, not blind faith, man's guide in mundane matters and developed his individuality to a far greater degree than anywhere else in Europe. All the great schoolmen flourished north of the Alps. The explanation for this condition lies, no doubt, in the fact that classical traditions never died out among the Italian people. Consequently the Renaissance was literally a rebirth and a revival illustrating the continuity of history. Italy was the first European country to free itself from the conditions of medieval life so that it could enter the new life we call modern. Classical civilization satisfied the national and æsthetic needs of the free spirits of Italy much more than medieval Christianity and scholasticism. The Roman Church did not deliberately break with ancient culture—the loss of Greek and the decline of ecclesiastical Latin in purity were simply the misfortunes of a universal ruin. Latin and Greek both continued to be sacred languages in the Eastern and Western Churches. Hence a revival of classical learning was to be expected as soon as the West was intellectually capable of bringing it about. And it was to be expected also that the Papacy would gladly accept it.

The Renaissance as it appeared in Italy, had on its surface the appearance of a revival of learning, but its roots penetrated the whole life of the people. Medieval students possessed a considerable portion of the Roman classics but did not comprehend either their true spirit or their real significance, simply because their vision was obscured by a veil of mysticism, by the odium of pagan unsanctity, by the scholastic methods of ascertaining truth, and by the practice of allegorical interpretation of the plainest words and most apparent facts. Dante (d. 1321) was a scholastic, and modern only in the courage with which he followed his own individuality and repudiated all arbitrary interference, whether ecclesiastical or political. He read Virgil, Horace, Ovid and other Latin writers, but caught no new vision from them. When Virgil guided him through hell, he did it as a teacher of the Church. Otherwise in his point of view, in his conception of the earth and the universe, in his assessment of human relationships, in his attitude towards the Church and State, in his employment of scholastic methods of reasoning, and in his appreciation of antiquity, he was a typical medieval man. He cannot be regarded as a precursor of the Renaissance.

Petrarch (1304–1374) was the apostle of the new era and the first modern man. Through a new method in scholarship based on the humanistic point of view, and a new psychology, he opened the way for the double discovery of man and the world. He was the first man of letters to attempt to emancipate himself completely from medieval concepts, to know himself subjectively, and to go back to Greece and Rome for all his standards of civilization. Although most of the Latin writers, and at least Aristotle among the Greeks, were read by the scholars of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, there was apparently no thought of making them the basis of culture, knowledge and human conduct. Petrarch, however, perceived the superiority of the ancient over the medieval civilization, and in consequence dedicated his life to the recovery of the sources of antiquity and to the propagation of ancient civilization as a substitute for that of his day. He had an undying love for Rome and was convinced of the superiority of Latin culture. He was thus both a reformer and a practical philosopher. He perceived the dignity of man as a rational, volitional and sentient personality, born on this earth with a duty to use it and a right to enjoy it. He was a rationalist who did not blindly believe, but examined and criticized, and credited personality and experience. He discovered the world of emotions within and the senses without. He recognized the inherent goodliness of man and nature. The fact of his universal acclaim by Emperor, Pope, bishop, noble, university and burgher proves pretty conclusively that he led a movement the world was waiting for and that a new age was dawning and looking for its leaders. He influenced all progressives who followed him.

Boccaccio (1313–1375), born at Paris of a Florentine father and a French mother, was a layman like Dante and not a priest like Petrarch. He attempted a mercantile career, and then for six years devoted himself to canon law, but turned his back on both with disgust to devote his life to literature. When talented men no longer found it necessary for a successful career to don a priest's habit, it signified that learning was emancipating itself from ecclesiastical tyranny. Boccaccio shared with his renowned contemporary most of the latter's views of life and also his enthusiasm for antiquity. He succeeded in having the first professorship of Greek established in the West at Florence. He was a tireless collector of ancient manuscripts, copied many of them with his own pen, and inspired many young scholars to follow his example. He helped to popularize and made fashionable the thirst for learning. He assailed ascetic medievalism and advocated the claims of nature and of the senses like a modern man. The things he stood for involved, no doubt unconsciously, for the future, liberty of action, thought and conscience. In his *Decameron* he threw his satirical dart at the ignorant monk and at the sensual priest—a composition from which Chaucer, Shakespeare, Lessing, Molière, Keats and others drew inspiration, and which marked the beginning of Italian prose as Dante's *Divine Comedy* founded Italian poetry. Because of his anticlericalism the Inquisition of the sixteenth century put this work on the Index. Like Petrarch, but unlike Dante, he abandoned both allegory and symbol, and was the first in Italy to substitute a literature of the people for the literature of the learned and aristocratic classes without surrendering his love for the classics. The new gospel preached by Petrarch and Boccaccio was the spring from which gushed two streams ; one carrying men back to the study of antiquity as a most worthy pursuit ; the other pointing to the future and urging man to study himself, to know his brother, and to conquer the world about him for his own useful enjoyment. These two pioneers may be credited with inaugurating the Renaissance. They had many disciples, among whom were Colluccio Solutato (b. 1330), Chancellor of Florence in 1375, who substituted classical for medieval Latin in his official reports, collected the letters of Cicero, wrote trenchant criticisms of the Pope, and was a man of great influence ; Marsiglio (1342–1394), who while in the convent of San Spirito at Florence founded an academy for the education of youths ; Vittoriano de Feletre (1397–1446), Guarino de Vérone (1370–1460), Antonio degli Alberti (1358–1415), the traveller and politician, Franco Soccheti, the humourist, and the Villani, a family of historians.

Of all the Italian cities, Florence, the home of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, easily assumed the leadership of the Renaissance as both the brain and the heart of the movement. There had Roman civilization most faithfully persisted and there had individuality found its freest evolution. With a deep-seated love for their city and a commendable pride in her achievements, the Florentines of all classes claimed some share in the apparently democratic government. The wealth and commerce of the citizens, which increased rapidly from the fourteenth to the fifteenth century, gave Florence a high standard of comfort; encouraged a show of luxury, pomp, and splendour that attracted wide attention; and produced a worthy patronage of culture in art and literature that made her the birth-place of the new age. Under the guidance of the powerful and able Medici family, called to rule by a popular movement, and more particularly under Lorenzo the Magnificent, the most distinguished member of the house, who died in 1492, Florence attained the height of its glory in culture and intellectual primacy. Symonds remarks: "Florence was essentially the city of intelligence in modern times. Other nations have surpassed the Italians in their genius. . . . But nowhere else except at Athens has the whole population of a city been so permeated with ideas, so highly intellectual by nature, so witty and so subtle as at Florence. The fine and delicate spirit of the Italians existed in quintessence among the Florentines. . . . The primacy of the Florentines in literature, the fine arts, law, scholarship, philosophy and science was acknowledged throughout Italy." Florence had indeed become the modern Athens of Europe—the home of artists and scholars, rebuilt with beautiful churches, palaces and civic buildings, and adorned with masterpieces of painting and sculpture—the fountain of knowledge at which choice men of all other nations drank deeply and satisfyingly. Cosmo de Medici, who ruled Florence for thirty years clearly perceived the dawn of the new epoch. "You might as well try to control the stars in their courses," he asserted, "or the sea in its tides, as to bind the Renaissance to Italy. It is a European, perhaps a world-wide influence". Hence he gathered about him the most famous group of classic scholars, musicians, painters, sculptors and architects the world had known since Greece was in her glory, gave them liberal financial support, and encouraged them by sympathetic criticism to produce masterpieces. He founded the famous Platonic Academy, which was continued under the patronage of his son, Piero, and his grandson, Lorenzo. The Academy reached its zenith of influence under the last-named Medici. Among its greatest teachers were: Ficino (d. 1499) who devoted his life to reconcile the teachings of Plato with those of Christ; Landino (d. 1405) who interpreted Horace and Virgil, translated the elder Pliny, and wrote a commentary on Dante; Politian (d. 1494) who was the best master of Greek in Italy and an able interpreter of both Latin and Greek literature; and Pico (d. 1494) a pronounced eclectic, who took the best from paganism and Christianity, and by a union of the two sought to give the world an ideal peace. Greek scholars flocked to the Tuscan capital, particularly after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, until a native could boast: "Athens, root and branch, has been transplanted here, to make her abode among us. Not Athens in ruins and in the hands of barbarians, but Athens as she was, with her breathing spirit and her very soil."

From Florence as the centre, this new cultural impetus spread over the entire Italian peninsula. Siena, ruled by a unique combination of commercialism and asceticism, became a powerful factor in the spiritual art of the Renaissance, but contributed little in literature. Venice was the gateway through which the Greeks entered Italy, but not many of them tarried there, where the citizens were given up to squabbles in politics and commerce. Later on, however, the rich Venetians became the patrons of men of letters and filled their palaces with works of art. The Republic, not the individual, received first consideration in Venice. Hence most of her painters were borrowed from the mainland, and her literature was mediocre. Genoa was so busy and prosperous that all the culture and art she possessed was bought with gold.

It was left to the courts of the princes, rather than to the capitals of the republics to encourage letters and literature, science and the fine arts. The Sforzas in Milan, the Gonzagas in Mantua, the Estes in Ferrara, the Montefeltros in Urbino, the Malatesta in Rimini, Robert and Alfonso in Naples, and the Popes in Rome zealously imitated Florence, employed her geniuses, and sought to encourage local talent of their own.

So eager was the Italian mind to recover the past that the

Italian tongue of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio was well-nigh abandoned for the revived Latin and the rediscovered Greek. Hence imitation and acquisition supplanted invention and creative ability. The Italians exhausted their energy in copying manuscripts, in translating Greek books into Latin, and in compiling grammars, commentaries, encyclopedias, epitomes, and dictionaries. Livy was the model for historians, Horace and Cicero for essays and orations, Seneca for tragedy, Plautus and Terence for comedy, while all correspondence was conducted in the dress of elegant Latinity. As a result by the end of the fifteenth century classical knowledge had been recovered beyond destruction for the centuries to come, medieval methods of reasoning had been abandoned, and Europe had been given a common culture. Pedantry and shallowness characterized much of the literary output, because of the uncritical worship of antiquity, until Politian and Ariosto returned to the simple, native beauty of the Italian language, and became once more original and creative.

Medieval art in method and spirit was revolutionized and gradually abandoned. The new art was dominated by the goddess of Beauty, by a passion for nature, and by a love for life with its joys and sorrows, with its pathetic sufferings and its wild fun, and with the deeds, passions, and sentiments of men. Classical literature even more than Roman remains stimulated painters, sculptors, and architects. Christian motives yielded to pagan subjects. Cimabue's work owed nothing directly to antiquity. Niccola Pisano studied the style in sculpture in fragments of Greco-Roman marbles. Giotto was the great pioneer who blazed the path for the renaissance in painting. A host of painters, architects, sculptors, goldsmiths, and woodcarvers carried forward the movement which culminated in the masterpieces of Da Vinci, Titian, Raphael and Correggio; Donatello, Michael Angelo and Sansovino; Bramante, Omodeo, and the Venetian Lombardi—all the products of an emancipated intellect and heart. This perfected art had completely outgrown the Middle Ages. It was essentially natural and human—joyous, sensuous, dramatic, sentimental, worldly, tragic—" an apocalypse of the beauty of the world and man "—original and inspired by " pure delight in loveliness and harmony for their own sakes."

Philosophy and science were similarly transformed by the magic touch of humanism. Petrarch had only unspeakable contempt for the logicians and materialists of his day. With the classical revival scholastic methods of thinking were spurned as barbarous by the forward looking men of the day. Curiosity took possession of the human intellect, and men were encouraged to experiment, to observe the workings of natural forces and to invent new devices. The ridiculous concepts about the world held by men of the Middle Ages were abandoned with a laugh or a sneer, while the human body was no longer regarded with so much awe and suspicion that it could not be studied. Anatomy was studied; the world was investigated; nature was asked to yield up her secrets. The writings of the ancients supplied hints which enabled men like Colombus, Copernicus, and Galileo to startle the world with their explorations and discoveries. This same wave of rationalism swept away the obscure theological metaphysics as obstructive to progress. The spirit of scientific research was born to break the shackles of ecclesiastical dogmatism, and men began to look for a new authority to replace the old. The first instinct was to return to the ancients as the source of authority, but that soon gave way to a reliance on the critical judgment of the day. Humanism, at the outset extremely uncritical, gradually came to demand the highest tests of criticism. Politian insisted upon subjecting literature and Roman law to severe tests, such as a modern scholar would employ. Lorenzo Valla in the court of Naples applied criticism to ecclesiastical traditions and historical documents. He destroyed the False Decretals and exposed the Donation of Constantine to ridicule as a forgery. He denied that the Apostles were the authors of the Apostles' Creed, and pointed out the corrupt state of the Vulgate in comparison with the earlier Greek texts, and thus began to formulate the standards of textual criticism for both the Bible and the classics. Not only were the moral abuses of the Church assailed, but blows were aimed at the very foundations of Christianity. Machiavelli turned his keen intellect to the analysis of man as a political being, to the classification of governments and the dissection of constitutions, to the results of public opinion, and to the causes and results of success and failure in public affairs. In these various ways did the "positive, inquisitive, secular exploratory spirit of the Renaissance, under the guidance of humanism, determine in a new sense the character of literature, art, philosophy, and science."

The education of the universities of the Middle Ages likewise underwent a tremendous change through the influence of humanistic studies. Bologna, Padua, and Salerno had been famous for the study of canon and civil law, physics, and medicine. Rhetoric, philosophy, and astronomy were soon added. These institutions were invaded and conquered by Greek and Latin somewhat as modern universities have been compelled to give a prominent place to the various sciences. The lecture rooms of the professors of ancient literatures and languages were crowded by students eager to possess the new learning from Italy and all European countries. The occupants of these new chairs, which had been established in the universities, and which were called "chairs of rhetoric", covered the whole range of classic civilization—history, metaphysics, law, science, government, war, religion, mythology, oratory, agriculture, astronomy, customs, social usages, grammar, philology, literature, biography, *et cetera*. Hebrew was studied for the Church and Arabic for medicine. The hints taken down by the students in their notebooks became the basis for further investigations in every European nation and determined the method of scholarship in Europe for the next three centuries. In the absence of printed books [1] these teachers went from city to city until every larger town had its academy or university for the propagation of the new learning. These universities were supplemented by private schools for both boys and girls, and by the employment of tutors for the children of the rich and the noble. These teachers were the model gentlemen of the age and set the standard for a new culture which rapidly gained in popularity until it modified the entire social structure of Italy and Europe.

Another important result of the Renaissance in Italy was the founding of libraries. Petrarch gathered together 200 manuscripts, among which was a Homer which caused him to lament that he was not "so fortunate as to learn Greek". Niccolo de Niccoli (d. 1437) bequeathed 800 manuscripts to

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[1] Booksellers at the universities, called *stationarii*, sold students' handbooks, glosses, and digests or *summen*. Loserth, 623. The first dealer in books in a modern sense was Vespasiano da Bisticci, who had as many as 45 copies of one work. Ib., 624. The 19 orations of Cicero cost 14 ducats or $35.

Cosmo de' Medici, who in 1433 founded the library of San Giorgio Maggiore, while in exile, in 1441 established the San Marco library and gave it 400 books, and later endowed the Medicean library and the library at Fiesole. Nicholas V created the Vatican library which contained 824 Latin and 352 Greek manuscripts and which Sixtus IV enlarged until it contained 1,000 Greek manuscripts and fifty-eight Bibles or parts of the Scriptures, and had a catalogue prepared. The Duke of Urbino possessed a large private library. Cardinal Bassarion in 1648 gave his collection of 600 manuscripts to St Mark's library at Venice. Siena, Milan and other cities imitated Florence. Many smaller libraries were owned by scholars and princes. When the printing press appeared it wrought miracles and flooded Italy with thousands of copies of the most important works. Other princes like the Visconti and Sforza patronized scholars and gave them financial support.

For the student of the history of the Church, the Italian Renaissance had three significant results: (1) the decline of morality; (2) the revival of paganism; and (3) the patronage of the Papacy and higher clergy.

The most conspicuous result of the Renaissance in Italy was a direct decline in morals. Humanism in its revolt against medievalism was worldly, irreligious, and pagan. In the transition from the Middle Ages to the modern civilization, much of the good was ignored and much of the evil was retained. Accompanying the new society and new culture were gross appetites, savage passions, brutalities, lust, immoralities, assassinations, poisonings, and violence, without the restraining influences of medieval piety and ecclesiastical control. Instead of attempting to check the decline of moral standards under the medieval Church, humanism contributed to the further decadence. Nowhere does one find a positive constructive reform movement among the humanists to purify the Church; whatever was done in the way of criticism of Popes, priests, and monks was wholly destructive. The literature and much of the art teemed with vulgarity, foul stories, and offences against morality and decency. The immoral tales of Boccaccio were imitated and excelled by dozens of writers. Poggio at seventy wrote his filthy *Jest-book*, which appeared before 1500 in twenty-six printed editions and in three Italian translations, and Burchard remarks, "They contain dirt enough to create a prejudice against the whole class of humanists." Filelfo's epigrams reflected the obscenities and common vulgarities of the brothels. Aretino and Beccadelli glorified licentiousness in brilliant verse and advocated the universal freedom of passion. The latter dedicated his indecent work to Cosmo de' Medici and was crowned by Emperor Sigismund at Siena in 1433, while the former, of all the Italian poets the foulest, was honoured by Charles V, Francis I, and Clement VII, and even hoped to win a cardinal's hat.

The humanists in their personal lives lacked all moral sense and were guilty of all sorts of excesses. Valla in his Ciceronian *Dialogues on Lust* in 1431 indirectly attacked Christian morality and defended the community of wives. Without shame he admitted the charge of seduction. He, together with Politian, Aretino, Pierluigi, the son of Pope Paul III, and Sanuto, were charged with the vice of pederasty so common among the ancients. The disease of syphilis and other sexual irregularities were prevalent. Machiavelli advised his patron to keep up the appearance of five virtues in order to deceive the ignorant. Seduction, adultery, infanticide, illegitimacy, and incontinence were not only justified but commended. Æneas declared that nearly all of the rulers in Italy were born out of wedlock. Aretino frankly admitted that cousins and relatives, and even brothers and sisters, met in the most intimate relations without conscientious scruple. A Roman annalist recorded the fact that every priest in Rome had a concubine "for the glory of God and the Christian religion". Public harlots were found in all the centres of the new learning, lived in high splendour, and were given classical Greek and Roman names. On all sides they were seen in company with poets, professors, counts and prelates.[1] To this immorality and lust were added vulgar luxury and extravagance, all sorts of gambling, drinking, and debauchery, sumptuous living and gluttony, assassination by paid hirelings, murder by poison, and the vendetta or blood-revenge. Symonds, after surveying the whole period, declared that Italian society was undergoing an enervation "in worse than heathen vices"[2]; and that the moral corruption of Rome about 1500 cannot be over estimated. Burchard asserts that the moral crisis was so great that even the best men despaired of an adequate reformation. Gregorovius sums up the situation thus: "The richest intellectual life blossomed in a swamp of vices"[1]; and Villari, "A prodigious intellectual activity, accompanied by moral decay."

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[1] Gregorovius, viii, 306 ff.

[2] *Revival of Learning*, 407.

Another curious effect of the revival of paganism was the veneration paid by cities and individuals to the relics of classical writers—a sort of imitation of relic worship in the Church. Padua boasted of the possession of the genuine bones of Livy, and Alfonso of Naples rejoiced in securing one of the arms of the ancient historian. Naples gloried in owning the tomb of Virgil. Parma was honoured by the bones of Cassius. Como owned both the Plinys, but Verona claimed the elder as its treasure. Sulmona was honoured as the birthplace of Ovid. Other places made similar claims until it looked as if the Christian saints would be replaced by pagan heroes.

Another result of the Italian Renaissance was the revival of paganism. Gregorovius goes so far as to say that the sole object of the movement was to restore paganism.[2] The large majority of the humanists were either indifferent to the Christian religion or despised it in the form of the Medieval Church. For Christianity, they substituted culture; for religious piety, spirituality, and truth, they set up the worship of art, letters, and eloquence. In their hearts they sacrificed to the gods of Rome and Greece, although they escaped the Inquisition and the stake by apparent conformity to the Roman Church.[3] They looked up to beauty and away from duty as the law of life. They had no eyes for the beauty of holiness—a fact which Michael Angelo bemoaned in his sonnets. Some of them even repented in their last days and died with the consolations of the Christian priesthood. Plato as an authority on life was made the equal if not the superior of Christ. Men were urged to follow nature as the safest guide. Ficino set the philosophy of Plato above the Christian religion, and it was seriously proposed to revise the liturgy of the Church by inserting his writings along with excerpts from the Bible.[4] The immortality of the soul was openly questioned in so many of the centres of learning that the Fifth Lateran Council in 1513 thought it wise to reaffirm the Christian doctrine and to instruct professors in the universities to defend it. Scepticism was rampant, even among the clergy.[1] After all it was a symptom of the time, not without its value, for it kept men's minds in a state of ferment and in the end led to constructive thought. Pagan sensuality and materialism were in reality ephemeral. The revival of an intense intellectual activity divorced from morals in the end produced a revival of conscience and an interest in the spiritual side of man. In pointing out the excesses of the Renaissance in Italy it must not be forgotten, however, that some noteworthy humanists and artists combined the new culture with a sincere Christian faith and devoted their energies to its purification and propagation. Traversari, Manetti, Bruni, Feletre, Ficino, Sadoleto, Fra Angelico, Fra Bartolomeo, Michael Angelo and many others were profoundly spiritual and lived model lives in a corrupt society. Bernardine of Siena (d. 1444) and Savonarola (d. 1498) led genuine reform movements against the corruptions, moral laxity and unbelief of the Renaissance period. But their voices were like that of one crying in the wilderness of sin, and the fruits of their labours were only transitory. The enduring impetus for reform came not from Italy, not from the brain of the Italian Renaissance directly, but from the northern part of Europe where the spiritual forces were still keenly alive and were spurred to action by the new thought.

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[1] *History of the City of Rome*, viii, 282.

[2] *Hist. of Rome*, vii, 536.

[3] Voigt, *Wiederbelebung*, ii, 213.

[4] Symonds, ii, 208; Pastor, iii, 117.

Still another effect of the Italian Renaissance was the further decline of the Papacy as the spiritual head of Western Christendom. The foundations of Papal leadership had been undermined by many a blow during the period from the Babylonian Captivity to the Great Reform Councils, and now received another thrust from the Renaissance. Medieval theology commanded implicit faith in the machinery of the priesthood in place of individual conscience. The effects of this doctrine were to transform living Christianity into religious formalism, to make thought stagnant, and to sow the seeds of moral disintegration and corruption in the clergy and laity alike. This did not occur, however, without protest, for daring souls all over Europe spoke out in no uncertain voice against the evils of the day and suggested sane as well as insane remedies—in fact the whole life of the Middle Ages was one struggle for reform. Conscience was suppressed, but not dead. Abelard insisted upon applying reason to theology and religion and Averroës urged men to use their consciences. The Renaissance ushered in a new order of things, a modern attitude towards life, made conscience the basis for morality, and demanded that human reason supplant implicit faith. Had the Papacy been wise enough to utilize these new forces for its own good and for that of the entire Church, it might have recovered the power which was rapidly slipping away and might have averted the great schism of the sixteenth century. But the occupants of the chair of Peter were strangely blinded to the perilous rock ahead; they neither comprehended the dangers of the Italian Renaissance nor understood the profound spiritual unrest of the North.

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[1] Gregorovius, viii, 300; Owen, *Skeptics*, 184–240.

The intellectual awakening in Italy undermined the Medieval Church and the Papacy (1) by a deadly criticism, destructive and not constructive, of the entire category of ecclesiastical evils and of the very foundations on which the Church was built; (2) by stressing the right of men to think for themselves about things religious as well as irreligious and to live normal lives in a real world; (3) by the scepticism and indifference to spiritual values so prevalent among the humanists; and (4) by the flagrant immorality of the devotees of the new culture, whose ideas and examples were imitated so generally by the clergy high and low.

Dante hurled the simonists headlong into the flames and did not hesitate to condemn Nicholas III, Boniface VIII, and Clement V to eternal punishment for the sin of simony. Petrarch, himself a pluralist and a polygamist, although a humble penitent in his old age, poured out the vials of his wrath against the evils of his day. Boccaccio, who indulged freely in irregular love affairs and in comic raillery and witty sarcasm, derided marriage, monkery, the confessional, and the worship of relics in the *Decameron*, which the Council of Trent condemned for both its immoralities and its anticlerical spirit.[1] In his latter years he was converted by a Carthusian monk, warned others against the evils of his own life, and fain would have destroyed the immoralities of his own writings. Valla, born in Rome, secretary to the King of Naples and a member of the court of Pope Nicholas V, fought for the right of private judgment, repudiated the Church as an infallible authority, upset the whole philosophy of monasticism, pointed out the forgeries on which the Church had erected some of its fundamental claims, made an assault on the temporal claims of the Papacy, and even questioned its spiritual power as a divine institution. In searching, critical daring his writings are equal to those of Luther, who greatly admired him.[1] He very narrowly escaped the Inquisition, enjoyed several benefices, and was buried in the Lateran. His own private life was far from model. Pico, a giant of learning, who died when scarcely thirty, repudiated the value of adoring images or the cross, assailed the dogma of transubstantiation, and insisted that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was merely symbolical. Intellectually tolerant of all creeds, he sought to effect a reconciliation of paganism and Christianity. Innocent VIII condemned thirteen of his propositions as heretical, but Alexander VI cleared him of all charges. He maintained that God put man in the world to study it and gave him a free will either to lead the life of a beast or to grow into a god-like character. Under the influence of Savonarola, he devoted the last years of his life to a study of the Bible and to preaching a purified Christianity to a sinful world. Of all the humanists he saw most clearly the opportunity of a thoroughly spiritualized Church to utilize the good elements in the Renaissance for the advancement of a Christian civilization in Europe.

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[1] In 1573 a curious edition, substituting laymen for priests and monks but retaining all the indecencies, appeared in Florence with the consent of the Pope. Schaff, v, ii, 578.

The Popes of the Renaissance were confronted by four specific problems, each one a colossal task demanding the spirit and genius of a Hildebrand: (1) to purify the Church of grave abuses and longstanding evils—administrative, financial, juristic, sacramental, ritualistic, and sacerdotal; (2) to secure a moral, spiritual, educated, and efficient priesthood, high and low, to govern the Church and to care for the religious needs of the people; (3) to modernize the Medieval Church in its constitution, in its dogma and in its governmental machinery so as adequately to meet the demands of a new age; (4) to assume the leadership in the Renaissance and to adapt the best in it for the purpose of strengthening the usefulness of the Church as the greatest force in the world. The pontiffs of this period, however, were not Hildebrands. While they did not close their ears to minor reforms, they found it easier to cling to the old fabrics of medieval theology and absolutism—to champion the old institutions and practices—to defend the old dogmas—and to crush all suggestions for radical reforms and revolutionary changes. They did not see, or if they did they refused to follow, a sane and sensible middle course, such as would have saved the unity of the Christian Church.

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[1] Scaff, v, ii, p. 596, n.[1].

The Papal attitude during the Renaissance period seems truly paradoxical. On the one hand the responsibilities and duties of their office as head of Christendom forced them to champion the old dogmas, scholastic theology, and the medieval ecclesiastical institutions. On the other hand they not only personally accepted the Renaissance, but as heads of the Church became its ardent patrons, without apparently perceiving the logically inevitable conflict between the two positions. Innocent VIII employed in the Papal curia the two humanists, Bruni, the critic, historian, biographer and translator of Greek, and Poggio, a pronounced sceptic, of loose life, an author of licentious literature and one of the ablest of the humanists, who held office under eight successive Pontiffs. John XXIII patronized the Greek scholar, Chrysoloras, and took him to the Council of Constance. Eugenius IV formed an open alliance with the humanists, who aided him in defeating the Council of Basel—Poggio, Aurispa, Vegio, Biondo, and Perotti who served him as secretaries.

With Nicholas V (1447–1455), the first and best of the Renaissance Popes, the new culture ascended the Papal throne. As a private tutor in Florence he caught the spirit of humanism, and as secretary of Cardinal Albergati he travelled over Europe collecting and copying manuscripts. As a Christian humanist, he made Rome the cultural capital of the world and hoped to ennoble religion by the use of art and literature. He founded the Vatican Library, scoured all Europe for original manuscripts and copies, employed a host of scholars, and gathered together 5,000 volumes—an enormous number for those days—which with later collections is the most valuable collection of Latin, Greek, Oriental, and ecclesiastical manuscripts in the world to-day.[1] A gigantic plan was drawn up for the reconstruction of the Leonine City, the Vatican, and St Peter's by Alberti, but not carried out. Fra Angelico completed the noble frescoes of St Stephen and St Lawrence in the Vatican, and other artists were given support and employment. He supported all scientific enterprises with unlimited generosity and drew the most famous savants from all countries to Rome. Since he was very tolerant of those who did not subscribe to all the doctrines of the Church, his humanistic court contained many who were at heart heathen, who refused to accept the offices of the Church and led lives far removed from the Christian model. This rationalistic group seldom openly attacked Christianity and even professed much respect for the Church as a social institution, but their interest was not in the things of the spirit. Had Nicholas V been big enough to utilize these powerful modern forces at his court to reconstruct the Christian Church, his Pontificate might have opened a new era in the world's history. Instead they were pulling the props from beneath the very edifice upon which they depended for support.

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[1] Valla received 500 gold thalere for a translation of Thucydides ; Filepo for a translation of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* was given a fine house in Rome, an estate, and 100,000 gold gulden. Monnier, *Lit. Gesch.*, 157.

The septuagenarian canonist, Calixtus III, succeeded Clement V in 1455 to rule but three years. The humanists in the Papal curia were largely replaced by monks. The full force of the Papacy was flung with medieval zeal into a crusade against the Turks. His zeal for the Church and his indifference to the Renaissance is shown by his order to melt the silver ornaments with which the manuscripts were bound into coin for the holy war. His open nepotism blots a career otherwise stainless.

When Pius II (1458–1464) was elected Pope, he was already famous as a poet, historian, humanist and ecclesiastical statesman. No man knew Europe better than he, nor saw more clearly the necessity of reformation, on the one hand, and the value to civilization of the Renaissance, on the other. He had been a powerful instrument in carrying the humanistic spirit across the Alps to northern Europe. His work as a reformer, however, was largely nullified by a troubled and not impeccable past, by his lack of deep spiritual insight and experience, by literary productions of a low moral tone, and by his broken health at the comparatively early age of 53. He confessed his sins, honestly repented, and issued a retraction in which he compared himself to Paul and Augustine. The responsibilities of his high office sobered him and made him thoughtful, but he lacked the missionary zeal of Paul and the passion for righteousness of Augustine. His own life made him tolerant of others and devoid of all persecuting bitterness. Resolutely he sought to preserve the unity of Christendom by suppressing all opposition to Papal authority and by driving back the threatening Turks.

The humanists thrilled with joy at his elevation to the Papal chair and expected much from him, but were disappointed. He banished the monks who had been given power under Calixtus III, posed as a patron of the arts, and encouraged the visit of copyists, goldsmiths, miniature-painters, painters, and architects, but the lavish expenditures for the encouragement of humanism, such as Nicholas V had made, were lacking. Nevertheless humanism had established itself in the court of the ruler of the Church as a subtle enemy and was leading men to think for themselves and to exercise their own powers of reasoning. No open assault was made on the primary dogmas of the Papacy, but the attitude of mind displayed was inimical to many of them. This intellectual atmosphere was more fundamentally dangerous than the violent heresies of the day, because it was so insidious that it could not be defined and crushed. So humanism at the Papal court was quietly undermining the doctrine of implicit faith upon which the Medieval Church rested.

The humanist Pius II was succeeded in 1464 by a splendour-loving Venetian, Paul II, the nephew of Eugenius IV, whose taste was that of a merchant of his native city who had grown rich in Oriental trade, and had developed a love for silks, silver plate, and fine jewels. His new tiara was decorated with precious stones at a cost of 2,000 florins, and he wore a costly emerald on his finger. He was lavish in gifts of money and articles of official adornment to his cardinals, in great feasts to the city magistrates, and in barbarous carnival sports for the masses. He accomplished some wholesome reforms by stopping bribery and simony, by checking the vendetta, by regulating taxes, and by suppressing the terrorizing bandits. Apparently he saw the pagan, non-Christian character of the Renaissance, for he dismissed the seventy humanists in his household whom he regarded as learned fossils wasting the patronage he wished to bestow upon those who could be of more practical service to him.

Of course the ousted scholars raised an outcry against the Pope, and their leader, Platina, in a letter of protest threatened to appeal to a council, but was cast into prison. The Roman Academy, composed of poets and artists, who assumed Greek and Roman names and carried on a cult of paganism, was suspended and twenty of the members taken to jail by the Papal police. Nevertheless Pastor insists that Paul II was not a foe of science and culture. He was an able ecclesiastical statesman, but guilty of nepotism for he gave cardinal's hats to three of his nephews.

Sixtus IV (1471–84), general of the Franciscans, university professor, and cardinal, was a Pontiff of unusual executive ability, and was regarded as one of the most learned men of the day. Like all rulers of that day, he sought to find glory in the patronage of art and letters. He gave hearty support to the Roman Academy and had its head as one of his trusted advisers. He prepared four beautiful rooms for the Vatican Library, separated the books from the archives, employed Latin, Greek, and Hebrew copyists, and provided a permanent endowment fund to enlarge it. Two famous scholars, Russi and Platina, were appointed librarians. He enjoyed collecting books and had them richly bound.[1] He took pride in patronizing goldsmiths, workers in bronze, decorators of majolica, artists, and architects. He built bridges and beautiful churches, and repaired walls, aqueducts, and palaces. Most noted of his structures was the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican, for the decoration of which the most famous Tuscan and Umbrian artists were summoned to Rome. This fresco-cycle, with its many valuable allusions to contemporary history, is still preserved and admired as one of the noblest monuments of Renaissance art. The capital of Christendom was modernized and beautified in its external forms, but the life within was more corrupt than ever. Sixtus IV was a guilty nepot, who made six of his nephews princes of the Church, and appointed other relatives to lucrative places. The city was the scene of continual riot and bloodshed. The cardinals and the curia grew more and more infected with worldliness during his Pontificate. Patronage of the Renaissance by the Papacy had ended in its conquest by the baser and coarser elements of humanism in Italy.[2]

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[1] Pastor, ii, 655; Albert, Eugenius, iv, Mainz, 1884.

[2] Infessura, *Diario*, Rome, 1890.

Sixtus IV was followed in 1484 by his ablest nephew as Innocent VIII, whom a satirist called "the natural father" of the Romans since he had lived such an incontinent life as a cardinal in Rome. The bloody war feuds continued, and the city was given over to murder and violence. Simony was rampant and unchecked. The new Pope created fifty-two new positions as sealers of bulls, and sold them for 2,500 florins, and also used 300 new offices to provide ready cash. To secure funds a Papal bull established eighteen additional secretaryships, which were disposed of for 62,400 ducats. Even the office of Papal librarian was sold. When asked why so few people were punished for crime, the vice-chamberlain answered, with a wink, "God does not wish the death of the sinner, but that he should live and pay." The houses of the clergy were filled with concubines. The cardinals led in the gayest debauches and dances in their luxurious palaces. Gambling was a common pastime among the clergy and laity. The Pope's son tried to seize a burgher's wife by force, and accused a cardinal of cheating him out of 40,000 florins in gambling. The higher clergy boasted of fine stables, huge packs of hounds, and fancy falcons. The gold and silver vessels of the churches were continually being stolen. Forged Papal bulls were secretly sold. When on one occasion the Pope fell into a swoon and it was thought that he was dead, the cardinals at once started to make an inventory, and found 1,100,000 florins in the chests. Recovering and hearing of what had been done, the Pope dryly remarked: "I shall have the pleasure of going to the funeral of these gentlemen of the College of Cardinals before I die." The enthusiasm for antiquity had now become the universal fashion and was professed by all the ecclesiastical leaders at the Papal court. The city was full of all kinds of artists and literary lights. In odd contrast this Pope in 1484 issued his Bull against witches in Germany, and in 1487 authorized a crusade to exterminate the Waldenses.

Alexander VI (1492–1502), as the highest bidder of the three candidates for the Papal office, secured by bribery eighteen out of the twenty-three cardinals, and was elected. The humanists hailed him with joy and one of them wrote: "Rome was made great by Caesar, but now Alexander makes it far greater. The first was a man, the second is a god." His reign was one long series of scandals. He bears the notorious distinction of being the most corrupt and immoral of all the Renaissance Popes. His dissolute habits as a handsome, cultured Spanish cardinal were in nowise changed after be became Pope at the age of 61. The supreme passion of his Pontificate was to advance in every possible manner the fortunes of his children, eight of whom he publicly acknowledged as his own. Cesare Borgia, his son, was ordained at the age of 6, appointed archbishop at 16, and made cardinal by his father at 18. The records of Rome and the Papal court for a generation were filled with his impiety, his immorality, his intrigues, and his crimes. A catalogue of all the evils of these closing years of the fifteenth century in the Papal court would fill a volume. The cardinal of Gurk told the Ambassador of Florence: "When I think of the life of the Pope and of some of the cardinals, the idea of living at Rome fills me with horror. If God does not reform his Church, I will have none of such a life." Alexander VI violated every commandment of the Decalogue, and was guilty of nepotism, lust, greed, treachery, theft, cruelty, injustice, and murder. He shrank from no crime to gain his end. The standards of Rome were very low, but his were lower, for to him nothing was sacred—virtue, marriage, character, life, or even his high office. Two years before the Pope's demise an orgy occurred in the Papal palace, which in obscenity and vulgarity shows how low the successor of Christ had fallen. Cesare Borgia had fifty public women spend the evening entertaining the elderly Pope and his daughter Lucretia, with the servants and friends, by dances and other capers, first in gaudy raiment and then nude, after which rich gifts were bestowed upon them.[1] It is a matter of no surprise, therefore, to find the report widely spread among the common people that when Alexander died, the devil was seen standing beside his bed ready to carry his soul down to hell.[2]

After the short reign of less than a month of the noble Pius III, Pope Julius II (1503–13) succeeded to the Papacy. He was one of those rare personalities who stand head and shoulders above ordinary men in force of will, indomitable courage, extraordinary acumen, heroic constancy, and statesmanlike ability. Like Innocent III he was ambitious to make the Papal State the strongest power in Italy and to revive the world-dominion of the Papacy and thus became the hero of the century in the eyes of Italian patriots, as the saviour of Papal power.

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[1] Burchard, iii, 167.

[2] Infessura, 286.

In his feelings and methods he was a genuine Latin and he belongs to those imposing figures of the Renaissance to whom the term " magnificent " was applied. He had an innate and discriminating instinct for the beautiful as well as the powerful, hence he took into his services the three greatest geniuses of the age—Bramante, Michael Angelo, and Raphael. Bramante planned the reconstruction of St Peter's and the Vatican. In 1506 the foundation stone for the new cathedral of Christendom was laid, which, after the labours of twenty Pontiffs, was dedicated 120 years later. In the Vatican Michael Angelo painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and Raphael gave the world his glorious frescoes glorifying the Church and the Papacy. At the same time the wonderful collection of antique art was made in the Belvedere.

Julius II was the most typical of all the Renaissance Popes. He combined the spirit of the Middle Ages with the spirit of the Renaissance. His one sweeping passion was to revive and to restore the temporal claims of Gregory VII and Innocent III in the world of his day, and his methods of operation were those employed by Boniface VIII. He was a victorious general, a successful administrator, and a shrewd financier. In no sense was he a spiritual man, nor did he understand the spiritual needs of the Church. He was too intelligent and wise not to comprehend the evils in the Church, but he did not understand or even suspect to what an extent they had undermined the efficiency of the ecclesiastical machinery, which absorbed his attention. While he issued a bull against simony in Papal elections, lived a simple, frugal life, and did not permit his three daughters to disgrace the Papal court, yet he issued a bull in 1506 promising indulgences to all who would contribute to the erection of St Peters'—a measure which under his successor was to create such a rumpus in Germany, and to permit the elements of discontent to unite into a party of rebellion. He was too busy to devote much attention to literature, but his general attitude was one of encouragement. His own lack of personal piety was itself the product of the Renaissance, hence he did not recognize any dangers in the cultural atmosphere surrounding his Papal throne.

Under Leo X (1513–21), the second son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, science and art at the Papal court culminated in the golden age. Only 37 years of age when elected, this scion of the Medici house was distinguished for his generosity, his mildness and courtesy, and his culture. As ruler of the Church his ambition, unlike that of Julius II, was to play the rôle of peacemaker although not at the loss of either the temporal or spiritual independence of the Papacy. As a statesman he often followed crooked paths, and was not unmindful of the interests of his family. To offset the influence of his cardinals in 1517 he created thirty-one new cardinals—the record in such appointments. At Florence, Leo X had become thoroughly imbued with the liberal influences of the Renaissance. As supreme Pontiff he squandered money almost to bankruptcy on music, hunting, gay banquets, and theatrical performances. His love of science and art led his contemporaries to eulogize him as the greater Maecenas. Literature was cultivated and patronized, but it often degenerated into mere dilettantism, and the brilliance of his court frequently resembled dazzling fireworks with nothing more than a memory behind it. He was a Ciceronian, who thought more of the form than the meat of literature. For the youth of Rome he re-established the Sapienza, a college founded by Eugenius IV for the study of classical letters. His envoys travelled over Europe in search of old classical manuscripts and made some rich discoveries. Pietro Bembo and Jacopo Sadoleto and Castiglione were the most conspicuous literary lights at the Papal court. In the field of art Leo X occupied an exalted position, for he made Rome the artistic capital of the world—the resort of poets, painters, sculptors, architects, musicians, and actors. "New buildings are planted every day," remarked a contemporary. "Along the Tiber and on the Janicular hill new sections arise." He wrote to Beroaldi, the editor of Tacitus, in 1515: "Nothing more excellent or useful has been given to men by the Creator, if we except true knowledge and worship of Himself, than these studies."

The Venetian ambassador reported that within a period of ten years, architects from northern Italy had erected 10,000 buildings, and that the palaces were filled with the richest furniture in the world. From France, Spain, and all parts of Italy artists were drawn to the Eternal City. He chose Raphael as his favourite artist and encouraged him to give full scope to his genius and marvellous versatility as painter and architect until his untimely death in 1520. He sent Michael Angelo to Florence to begin those noble memorials for the Medici family, completed under Clement VII.

Although Leo X spent his whole life in the service of the Church, for he was tonsured at 7, nominated as archbishop at 8, and made cardinal-deacon at 14, yet he was not interested in true religion and at heart was a pagan. He was an opportunist and given to duplicity in dealing with friend and foe alike. He was guilty of nepotism and strained every nerve to advance the interests of his family. While he sought, on the whole rather successfully, to uphold the prerogatives of his office, it was only for the purpose of enjoying it as a worldly prince. Like a true devotee of the Renaissance, pleasure, not piety and serious concern for the welfare of the Church, occupied his mind. He sought neither to regenerate the Church nor to correct the evils in the Papal court. Personally he was not unchaste and not intemperate in his habits, but in his spare time he gave himself up to playing cards with his cardinals, to hunting and fishing, to theatrical performances of a very questionable character, to extravagant entertainments, and to vieing with poets in making doggerel verses. The Catholic historian Sarpi said: "Leo would have been a perfect Pope, if he had combined with his other good qualities a moderate knowledge of religion and a greater inclination to piety, for neither of which he showed much concern." Yet Leo X was the high-priest of Christendom, the successor of Christ on earth, God's vice-gerant, and the heir of those prerogatives and responsibilities created by Gregory I, Gregory VII, and Innocent III. When all these things are taken into account, one does not wonder that he utterly failed to appreciate the dangerous discontent abroad in Christendom and the significance of the revolt led by Luther in the North and to cope with the disastrous crisis confronting the Church.[1]

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[1] Roscoe, *Life and Pontificate of Leo X*, 6th ed., London, 1853.

CHAPTER XXI

THE RENAISSANCE AND THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH: II. OUTSIDE ITALY

143. *The Renaissance in Germany*

THE Italians of the fifteenth century regarded the Germans as still in the medieval period. Æneas Sylvius an accomplished man of letters, secretary of Emperor Frederick III, and later known as Pope Pius II, declared that intellectual activity in Germany was all theological and scholastic. "They are good people," he wrote, "but they are not interested in things that interest me. . . . They prefer horses and dogs to poets, and like horses and dogs they shall go down fameless unto death." The German clergy were far from models of Christian leaders. Cardinals patronized mask-balls and participated in the dancing. Bishops led their troops on the battle-field and employed their spiritual weapons for purely political advantages. Archbishop Gunther of Magdeburg never said mass until he was in office thirty-five years, while Robert of Strassburg never said one at all. The monks of Leubus refused to hold masses for the dead unless the abbot gave them a daily measure of beer as good as his own. The cautious Abbot of Volkesrode restricted the quantity of wine allowed his monks so that they might at least be sober when entering the choir. Pluralism continued to be a crying evil, and in at least one instance one prelate had twenty-four livings with no duties to perform. Loud complaints were heard against the constant begging of the clergy and the monks.[1] The nunneries were called temples of frivolity. The superstition of all classes was truly amazing. There were saints for every ill and misfortune—Anthony for inflamed eyes or limbs, Erasmus for stomach-ache, and Martin for sick cattle. The collecting of relics went on at a tremendous rate—Frederick the Wise of Saxony had 5,000 relics or sufficient for 500,000 years' absolution! The Archbishop of Mainz boasted of forty-two entire bodies of saints and 9,000 parts of relics. Nicholas Muffel of Nuremberg complained bitterly that after thirty-three years of effort he had succeeded in securing only 308 specimens—but even those did not keep him from death on the gallows for theft.[1] Among the rare relics preserved were pieces of Noah's ark, drops of sweat from Gethsemane, incense offered by the wise men from the East, the Virgin's milk, pots used by Jesus at Cana, with some of the wine, bits of Aaron's rod and the burning bush, samples of the manna sent to the Hebrews in the desert, pieces of the crown of thorns, straw on which Jesus lay, the leg of the ass on which Jesus rode into Jerusalem, a tunic of John the Evangelist, a portion of the table on which the last supper was eaten, a finger of St Anne, the body of one of the Bethlehem Innocents, and even a sample of the earth from which God made Adam. The Renaissance in Germany came as a powerful reaction against all these things, partly as a positive demand for the purification and reformation of these abuses and evils, and partly as a pagan revival of a wholesome enjoyment of life. The old, harsh, selfish, repressive, monastic ideal disappeared. The vileness of the body was denied. Nature became the theme of literature and art. An appeal to the senses was no longer regarded as a sin. Men dined and drank together as they discussed the problems of life. Joking and hilarity were recommended. "I have left you," wrote Celtis, in an ode to the people of Ingolstadt, "because I cannot stand your bad beer; because no wine grows on high mountains, no hills rise above your city, and no shady river flows by you except the huge Danube." He was going to the Rhine where delicious wine could be secured, and where "merriment accompanies drinking". "The spirits have awakened," said Ulrich von Hutten, "it is a delight to live." Erasmus declared that Horace and Cicero were worthy of eternal salvation, that he could not read the latter's ethical writings without kissing them, and that the life of Socrates forced him to cry out, "Blessed Socrates, pray for us." These new feelings completely overwhelmed the words of that Dominican croaker, who sneered from his pulpit. "A new rebellious language has been invented; it is called Greek; in it has been written a book full of dangerous passages, the New Testament by name."

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[1] Thatcher and McNeal, No. 177.

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[1] Bezold, 99; Siebert, 59; Schaff, v, ii, 742.

Italy, as the schoolmaster, taught the new learning to France, Spain, Germany, and England—gave them the new view of human life, a new interest in the world about them, a new method and course of education, and new social manners. But the scientific spirit of criticism and inquiry, which was the motive power of the larger movement called the Renaissance, produced different results in the various countries.

Germany was already well provided with centres of intellectual life—seven universities having been founded between 1348 and 1409.[1] About the year 1440 the new learning was introduced by the itinerant professors, Peter Luder and Samuel Karoch. Soon many German scholars visited the Italian lecture-rooms and carried back with them a knowledge of the methods of the Italian humanists. Other avenues through which Italian culture spread to Germany were the imperial and ecclesiastical relations, the large volume of trade, and the steady stream of pilgrims going to Rome. Often as many as 100 Venetian merchants were seen at the same time in Cologne or Lübeck. In 1484 Venice collected 20,000 ducats in tolls on German wares, and in 1850 bought 1,000,000 ducats worth of goods. Under the patronage of German princes like Maximilian, Cardinal Albert of Mainz, Frederick the Wise of Saxony, and Eberhard of Würtemberg,[2] Greek, Latin, and Hebrew erudition began to flourish on Teutonic soil. Cities like Strassburg, Nuremberg, Augsburg, and Basel became centres of groups of scholars and artists imbued with the Italian movement. Academies, like that at Florence, were established in Heidelberg and Vienna. The invention of the printing press about 1450 was a powerful agency for popularizing the propagandism. The German Renaissance was not an imitation of the Italian, but owing to the temperament of the people it revealed a different character, and followed its own course. It was not so exclusively aristocratic as in Italy, but more democratic and popular.

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[1] The following universities were also founded: Rostock, 1419, Griefswald and Freiburg, 1456, Treves, 1457, Basel, 1459, Ingolstadt, 1472, Tübingen and Mainz, 1477, and Wittenberg, 1502.

[2] Among the well-educated noblewomen who patronized the humanists were Pfalzgräfin Mechtild, the friend of Püterid, and Hermann von Sochsenheim, Elizabeth von Würtemberg praised by Nikolas von Wyle, Eleanor von Österreich, and Elizabeth von Nassau, who translated French romances into German, and Margareta von Stoffel, who wrote Latin poetry. Steinhausen, *Kulturgesch des Deutschen*, 465.

German Gothic art owed little to southern influences, while the Romanesque, wherever employed, was unsatisfactory. German painting and wood carving excelled in technique, but did not display the paganism and did not equal the beauty of the Italians. The new learning penetrated all classes of society more slowly than in Italy, and new social standards were substituted for those of the Middle Ages with more difficulty. The rougher German dialects did not so readily yield to the refining, artistic classical influences. Humanism did not spread freely and spontaneously, but had to win its way gradually against a tremendous amount of conservatism and inertia. The German leaders of the Renaissance received their inspiration, not from Vienna or Cologne, but from Florence and Padua, and when they began their propagandism at home had to encounter opposition and persecution. Hostility came not so much from priestly ignorance and monastic prejudice, as in Italy, as from the champions of scholastic theology in the universities. The German humanists were less brilliant and not so elegant, but they were more exact in scholarship, more serious in their purposes, and more insistent on a sane, moral life. For the most part they were teachers in the universities, not debauched by gross, pagan immorality. They were not swept off their feet by a love for the Latin and Greek classics, nor did their interest centre in a burning desire to translate them into their native tongue. German humanists studied and mastered Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, not so much to gratify a cult of antiquity as to better understand the Old and New Testaments, the mainsprings of the Christian theological system. The German intellect was critical, pugnacious, exploratory, intense, argumentative and determined—hence it found keener enjoyment in combating the arrogant assumptions of monks and theologians than in the pursuit of ethical self-culture; it insisted upon the right to busy itself with the practical problems of life, and it devoted its best energies to theological criticism. German humanism absorbed the minds of a widely scattered group of learned men, but it did not occupy the attention of the entire nation until Pfefferkorn's attack on Reuchlin forced it to become violently militant. That assault on honest thought and the right of free inquiry aroused the whole nation and paved the way for the Reformation.

In the beginning the German humanistic movement was closely allied with the Italian—indeed the German scholars were powerfully influenced by Italian culture north of the Alps, as well as south. Charles IV knew Petrarch and personally employed Italian artists.[1] Chancellor John von Neumarkt cultivated Rienzi who visited Bohemia. Laurentius Valla cried out: "Rome we have lost, but in the power of splendid lordliness of the Latin tongue we rule over a large part of the earth—to us belong Italy, Spain, Germany, Pannonia, Dalmatia, Illyrica, and many other peoples."[2] Humanism was the greatest international force of the period—more potent than Church or Empire. Italian humanists like Poggio and Æneas Sylvius travelled in Germany. For years the German clergy, scholars and rulers were in intimate contact with the Italians at the three great reform councils. Nicholas of Cusa was at Basel and Æneas Sylvius served as secretary of the imperial chancellor from 1443 to 1450. Many German students attended the Italian universities. At the University of Bologna from 1289 to 1299, 533 German students were registered, from 1300 to 1349, 1,259, and from 1350 to 1400, 415. There were few German jurists who had not been educated in Italy—and it is significant that they were among the first German humanists. Many of the German prelates who had been educated in Italy were humanists. Young German merchants were sent to Italy to learn business methods, and the book-keeping used in Germany was borrowed from Italy. All these forces show the relation between the Italian and German humanistic movements. It was not long, however, before the German movement began to follow its own independent course.

While the Renaissance, as a European movement, has its common motive forces, its common purposes and its similar results, yet the fact cannot be too strongly emphasized that both its process and immediate aim took one course in Italy and followed quite a different path in Germany. In Italy its immediate goal was a new art, a new learning and a new life based on classical civilization although not in slavish imitation. In Germany its primary object was a new use for a new Bible, a recreated Christianity, a reformed Church, and an enlightened spiritual life. Germany had already been awakened by a profound reform movement, whose roots ran back to Wiclif and Huss, to the constructive attacks on the evils and abuses growing out of the Babylonian Captivity and the Great Schism, to the great reformatory councils, to the progressive leaders of Catholic thought, to the German mystics, and to the more radical reformers. The Renaissance, which in its inception had little or nothing to do with the moral reformation of the Church, when transplanted to Teutonic soil, was immediately transformed into a mighty reformatory agency and thus amalgamated with the other reform movements. Reuchlin, who studied in Rome, and Erasmus, who lived in Venice, employed their critical knowledge of Hebrew and Greek to give the world a new Bible. The Germans read it with eyes opened by humanism. In this manner the new spirit which had given Italy a new literature, art and culture gave Germany a new Christianity and precipitated a new schism in the Latin Church. Essentially the same energy, critical insight, and literary skill, powerfully aided by the invention of paper and the printing press, restored the freedom of intelligence in Italy and the freedom of conscience in Germany. The Reformation was in large measure the Teutonic Renaissance—the answer to the Italian movement. It must be remembered, however, that the Reformation at the outset was anti-clerical, rather than anti-Church.

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[1] Steinhausen, 469.

[2] Ib., 470.

The University of Erfurt was probably the first to welcome the new culture, when in 1466 it received Peter Luder (1415–1474), who had studied in Rome and Greece, and had visited Asia Minor. He lectured on Virgil, Ovid, and other Latin writers, and also on the Church Father, Jerome. Nicholas Marschalk taught Greek and wrote the first Greek book printed in Germany in 1501. John of Wesel and Truttvetter were also professors.

Conrad Mut had studied with Pico at Florence and had taken his degree in law at Bologna before he was appointed a professor at the University of Erfurt. He was thrilled by a contact with young people and inspired them with a love of the new studies. In theology he was far from orthodox. He asserted that " The true Christ is not a man, but spirit and soul" hence Christianity is older than Jesus. In a letter to his pupil, Urban, he wrote in 1505: "There is but one god and one goddess; but there are many forms and many names—Jupiter, Sol, Apollo, Moses, Christ, Luna, Ceres, Proserpina, Tellus, Mary. But do not spread it abroad; we must keep silent on these Eleusinian mysteries. In religious matters we must employ fables and enigmas as a veil. Thou who hast the grace of Jupiter, the best and greatest God, shouldst in secret worship the little gods. When I say Jupiter, I mean Christ and the true God. But enough of these things, which are too high for us."[1] He privately denounced fasts, the confessional, and masses for the dead, and called monks "cowled monsters", but had no thought of breaking with the old Church. He was typical of that group of humanists who fought for intellectual freedom, but did not too openly contend for spiritual freedom from the people's slavish fear of the medieval priesthood. Agricola and Luther were students, who greatly profited by the critical atmosphere. Chairs of poetry were established at Freiburg in 1471 and at Basel in 1474. Ingolstadt had Reuchlin as a professor, and in 1492 Conrad Celtis was appointed professor of poetry and eloquence. Basel created a chair of poetry in 1474 and called Finariensis and Publicus, two Italians, as professors. Sebastian Brandt was also a teacher at this institution, which could claim among its list of students Reuchlin, Zwingli and Leo Jud. Tübingen received an endowment for a chair of oratory in 1481, and among its professors claimed Gabriel Biel and Henry Bebel. Its most distinguished student was Melancthon, who also taught there from 1512 to 1518. In 1521 Reuchlin was summoned to Tübingen to lecture on Hebrew and Greek. Wittenberg, founded in 1502, gained an international reputation through its two professors Luther and Melancthon, who became professor of Greek in 1518 at the age of 21, and soon had a crowded classroom. The universities of Heidelberg, Cologne, and Leipzig meanwhile closed their doors to the new learning and remained the champions of scholasticism until the Reformation forced them to compromise.

In the fifteenth century popular education was more advanced in Germany than in any other European country.

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[1] Lindsay, 65; Krause, *Briefwechsel des Mutianus*, Cassel, 1855, 35.

Every town of any importance had its common school.[1] The Brothers of the Common Life were especially active in planting these schools and in teaching in them. At Deventer the attendance ran as high as 2,200 [2] and at Schlettstadt 800. In many of the schools Latin and Greek were taught. Luther urged the Saxon towns to establish schools for both boys and girls and to include Latin and music in the course of study. Among the most famous German schoolmasters were Hegius of Deventer, who banished the old text-books and made the classics the backbone of the curriculum; Wimpfeling and Trebonius, who taught Luther at Eisenach. In cities like Strassburg, Basel, Nuremberg, and Augsburg groups of humanists vied with the leading universities in inculcating the new learning. The printing press was likewise a powerful agency in popularizing the Renaissance.

One of the greatest revolutions produced by the Renaissance in Germany was the invention of the printing press of Gutenberg at Mainz in 1450. "Aha," cried Conrad Celtis, "no longer can priests monopolize their holy science; heaven and hell must now give up their secrets." Many German cities soon became centres of the new industry. By 1470 Anthony Coberger of Nuremberg was employing 100 assistants and apprentices in running twenty-four presses, and by 1500 thousands of printers were in established positions. Books illustrated with wood-cuts were used successfully to instruct the masses of the people. Of all the books printed the Bible was the most important—and up to 1500 ninety-eight complete editions of the Vulgate had appeared. Printed translations of the Bible were common. Before Luther's translation had appeared, seventeen translations (not merely editions) in German—fourteen in high German and three in low German—had been printed. The Cologne Bible (1470–1480) exhorted all Christians to read it for the purpose of getting the true meaning, and the Lübeck Bible (1494) contained the same injunction. Yet Luther said: "When I was twenty years old I had never seen a Bible." If that was true, it was his own fault, for his own university had several copies of the Bible in its library. From Germany these pioneer printers, like Italian scholars, went all over Western Europe—as far away as Barcelona in Spain and to Rome as early as 1467. In 1507

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[1] Bezold, 204.

[2] Jannsen, i, 27.

Wimpfeling declared "that as the Apostles went forth of old, so now the disciples of the sacred art go forth from Germany into all lands and their printed books become heralds of the Gospel, preachers of the truth and wisdom". Thus the printing press became the most powerful instrument in popularizing the best fruits of the Renaissance and in merging it into the Reformation. The German clergy welcomed this new invention and many of the cloisters set up presses of their own.

Libraries were quickly founded at all the universities and in connection with many churches. The Ratsherr Gurwin von Hameln left the Andreaskirche 336 books in 1495. The nobles were proud of their libraries. Püterich von Reichertshausen owned 164 volumes of German poets. Elberth von Valkensdorf possessed fifty German books. Bishops and scholars boasted of their collections. Even the common people had Latin and German books and were called "bookfools" by Sebastian Brandt.[1]

Among the German humanists, eight stand out more conspicuously than the others :—

Roelef Huisman, known as Agricola (1443–1485), who did for Germany what Petrarch did for Italy. After hearing lectures at Erfurt, Louvain and Cologne, he went to Italy to study in the Universities of Pavia and Ferrara. After visiting Rome, he returned to Germany about 1479 and in 1482 accepted a professorship at Heidelberg where, and at Worms, he delivered lectures for three years on the literature of Rome and Greece. But he never lost his devotion to theology and was interested in the study of Hebrew. He wrote a life of Petrarch in German. By his personal influence he did much to promote the new learning in Germany. In his primary literary work he sought to change the scholastic philosophy of the day. As a scholar he enjoyed an enviable reputation and his private life was pure and pious. Both Melancthon and Erasmus bestowed upon him their highest praise.[2]

John Trithemius (1462–1505), Abbot of the Benedictine monastery at Sponheim, organized a learned academy, collected a famous library of 2,000 volumes, compiled an encyclopedia of the Church Fathers and wrote a biographical dictionary of Germany. Scholars, nobles and prelates visited him to read the Latin and Greek authors in his library. He had a high reputation for scholarship and for profound sympathy with the new learning.

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[1] Steinhausen, 465.

[2] Ihm, *Der Humanist R. Agricola, sein Leben und seine Schriften*, Paderborn, 1893.

Conrad Celtis (1459–1508) studied at several German universities and then went to Italy where he visited Ferrara, Padua, and Rome. Returning to his native land, he wandered hither and thither, teaching the spirit of the new learning, an apostle of the new thought. His travels took him as far as Poland and Hungary where he founded humanistic societies like the Italian academies. His poems were tinged with paganism and his influence started many a chain of independent thinking.

Sebastian Brandt (1457–1521) attended the University of Basel, his native city, and began his career there as a teacher of law. Basel was a centre of humanism and three printing presses were aiding the movement. Brandt was famous for his pungent, poetical satire, *The Ship of Fools*, which described a ship manned by fools sailing the sea of life. Among the hundred and ten fools aboard were the book-fool, the money-fool, the fashion-fool and the fool of useless studies. They sailed on past the land of idlers until they arrived at the land of fools. The ignorance and immorality of the clergy were denounced in comical phrases and incidents. This poem struck a popular chord of dissatisfaction with existing conditions and became the most popular writing of the time. It was translated into French, Dutch, and English and caused all northern Europe to laugh first and then to think.[1]

Jacob Wimpfeling (1450–1528) of Schlettstadt, a professor at Heidelberg, was deeply interested in the education of the young and believed that only through education could the evils of the day be remedied. "The better education of the young," he wrote, "is the foundation of all true reform, ecclesiastical, rational, and domestic." So popular were his writings that by 1520 almost 20,000 copies of them were sold. He was both an ecclesiastical reformer and an enthusiastic humanist.

John Reuchlin (1455–1522), born in Pforzheim, completed his university course in Germany, France, and Italy, and was one of the most solid scholars of his day. He learned Greek from native Greeks, and Hebrew from John Wesel and Jewish rabbis in Germany and Italy. He was a doctor of laws and practised his profession for a time in Stuttgart. His legal training secured him a position in the court of Eberhard, Count of Würtemberg, which he held many years. He served the count and even Emperor Maxmillian on many delicate diplomatic missions at home and abroad, and was made a Count of the Palatinate by the latter. At Eberhard's death he removed to Heidelberg where in 1496 he became the chief tutor in the family of Elector Philip. In 1520 he was called to the University of Ingolstadt as professor of Greek and Hebrew, but was driven away the next year by the plague and became lecturer at Tübingen. He died in 1522 in the Black Forest.

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[1] Janssen, i, 125. A new edition of Barclay's English translation by Jamison appeared in two volumes at Edinburgh in 1874.

Reuchlin was not only the most profound scholar of his age, more especially in Greek and Hebrew, but was also deeply interested in the reformation of the Church. At the age of twenty he prepared a Latin lexicon at Basel which ran through twenty-five editions up to 1504. He also wrote a Greek grammar and gave the modern world the first important Hebrew grammar in 1506. He translated Greek authors into Latin and German. He issued in 1512 the Penitential Psalms in a Latin translation with grammatical notes—a work used by Luther. He pointed out the errors in the Vulgate, suggested corrections, and emphasized the necessity of going back to the original sources, a practice which he invariably followed in all his work.

Reuchlin's attainments in Hebrew scholarship led to a most significant conflict between the scholastics and the humanists in Germany, that aroused all German thinkers. Feeling that the scientific methods of the humanists and the increasing freedom of thought were undermining their position, the champions of medievalism hoped to recover their forlorn cause by an assault on Hebrew learning. It was mooted about that since Hebrew was the language of the Jews who had crucified Christ, that evil language should be shunned by all faithful Christians. It was also intimated that any person who devoted himself to the study of Hebrew should be suspected of heresy. Hence under imperial orders the Archbishop of Mainz required Reuchlin to give his opinion on the advisability of burning all Hebrew books except the Old Testament. In reply he divided the Jewish books into seven classes, only one of which he thought deserved to be destroyed. Immediately the conservative forces united to crush him—Cologne and other universities upholding the old order, the Archbishop of Mainz, Hoogstraten, Dean of the Dominicans at Cologne and Inquisitor for Germany, and the Emperor Maximilian. A converted Jew named Pfefferkorn was used as a tool to open the attack, but being no match for Reuchlin, Hoogstraten himself came forward as the champion of obscurantism. All intelligent people in Germany followed the keen controversy for ten years. The humanists particularly felt that they were being attacked in the person of Reuchlin. The reformers, Carlstadt and Luther gave him their support for the same reason. Pfefferkorn's *Handmirror* was answered by Reuchlin's *Spectacles*. The former then replied in *The Burning Glass* and was answered by a *Defence against all Calumniators*. Vulgar terms and harsh epithets were employed on both sides as the conflict grew more bitter. Two trials were held in Germany and then the case was appealed to Rome. In the end Leo X condemned Reuchlin's book, *The Spectacles*, ordered him to keep silent and forced him to pay the costs of the trial.

The conflict involved such vital principles that a Papal decision could not stop it and the hostility between the two camps increased in bitterness. A large number of tracts and pamphlets appeared on both sides. No less than forty-three eminent German scholars, among them Erasmus, Ulrich von Hutten, and Melancthon, ranged themselves on the side of Reuchlin against the medievalists. *Letters of Obscure Men* was their chief literary missile. The first series of forty-one letters appeared in 1515, and the second series of seventy letters in 1517. Crotus Rubianus and Ulrich von Hutten were the chief authors, but were probably assisted by other humanists. These letters were fictitious, written in the German-Latin jargon of the day and purported to come from members of the clerical party addressed to Professor Gratius at Cologne requesting him to settle a great many points of theology, morals, and Christian conduct then in dispute. The most ridiculous questions were asked, the grossest ignorance and the most blatant pedantry were shown, and the silly foibles and shallow quibbles of the old Church were set forth under the guise of simple sincerity. Germany roared with laughter over them and they scored a point against medievalism which volumes of solid argument could not have accomplished. The Renaissance had won a notable victory for the Reformation, yet Reuchlin showed little positive sympathy with the reform movement led by Luther and Melancthon, although they were deeply conscious of the indirect assistance he gave them.

Ulrich von Hutten (1488–1523), of noble birth, was placed in a monastery by his father but broke away, attended the University of Cologne, travelled in Italy, and became a champion of the new culture. In 1517 he returned to Germany, accepted a place at the court of the gay humanist, Albrecht, the Archbishop of Mainz. Turning his attention to poetry, he was given the poet's crown by Maximilian and hailed by Erasmus as the great epic poet of Germany. Experiences at Cologne and at Rome enabled him to see clearly two things, first the uncompromising hostility of the conservative monks and clergy to humanism, and secondly, the absolute necessity for ecclesiastical reformation from Pope to parish priest. As early as 1513 he wrote biting epigrams[1] from Italy denouncing Julius II as "the corrupter of the earth, the plague of mankind". In 1517 he edited Valla's tract on the Donation of Constantine with an ironical dedication to Leo X, which in ridicule and contempt surpassed everything written in Germany against the Papacy.[2] In a Latin poem, *The Triumph of Reuchlin*, written in 1518, he defended that famous humanist and demanded the punishment of Pfefferkorn, as the champion of superstition, barbarism, ignorance and envy.[3] He translated ten of the *Letters of Obscure Men* into German, and thus permitted the entire nation to read his demand for the curbing of Papal tyranny, the dissolution of the convents, the use of their *annates* and lands for the poor, and the reformation of the immoral monks. He ridiculed the holy coat at Treves as a lousy old rag and said the relics of the three kings at Cologne were only the remains of three Westphalian peasants. His witty shafts were aimed particularly at the shortcomings of the Papal court—the sale of offices and honours, worldliness, corruptions, and immoralities. He declared that the Pope was trembling in fear of the discovery of these evils, of the union of the German princes, of the growing intelligence of the people, and of the general demand for reformation. His keen humour touched the German heart, earned the amused applause of the educated, and aroused the ire of the conservatives.[1] He openly and fearlessly gave his support to Luther, to whom he wrote: "We are fighting for a common freedom to liberate an oppressed Fatherland." In him for the first time the humanistic culture employed its full strength, heart and brain, for the success of the Protestant Revolution. Of course he was placed under the ban and even Erasmus turned against him. After 1520 he was forced to flee to Switzerland, where he lived until his death in partial concealment under the protection of Zwingli.

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[1] Strauss, *Hutten's Gespräche*, i, 99 sqq.

[2] Janssen, iii, 74.

[3] Böcking, iii, 413; Geiger, 522, gives a facsimile of the famous woodcut in the work.

Erasmus (1466–1536), born at Rotterdam, the son of a priest, orphaned at 13, was educated in the famous Dutch schools. Then he was persuaded against his will to enter a convent at Steyn—a step which he later on deplored as a calamity since it was the cause of his feeble constitution. His cleverness won the friendship of the Bishop of Cambray, who sent him to the University of Paris, and gave him some support, although he paid most of his expenses by tutoring some young Englishmen. In 1499 he made his first visit to England, where at Oxford he met Colet and Sir Thomas More, but remained only a few months. The next few years he spent in France and Holland. His first book of Proverbs was issued in 1500, and his *Manual of the Christian Soldier* in 1502. He made his second visit to England in 1505, and remained three years, when he accepted an offer from a Genoese physician in the court of Henry VII to go to Italy as the tutor of his two sons. At Turin he received the doctor's degree in divinity, then spent some months at Venice, and afterwards visited Bologna, Florence, and Rome.[2] In 1509 he returned to England, expecting a good position from the young Henry VIII, and remained five years. He was appointed Professor of Divinity at Cambridge and taught Greek, received an annuity from Lord Lovejoy, and another from Archbishop Warham.[3] *The Praise of Folly* was published in 1511, based on notes from his Italian experiences. From 1515 to 1521, he lived in various cities of the Lowlands, and secured complete dispensation from his monastic vow.[1] His Greek New Testament appeared in 1516, and his *Colloquies* in 1518. When Leo's bull against Luther spread persecution to the Netherlands, Erasmus went to Basel, where he published the works of the leading Church Fathers. When Basel became Protestant, refusing to come out openly for the Reformation, he withdrew to the Catholic city of Freiburg in 1529. In 1535 he was offered a cardinal's hat by Paul III, but refused it on account of his age. This same year he returned to Basel, broken in health, and died there in 1536, while working on an edition of the writings of Origen, and a tract *On the Purity of the Church.*

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[1] Strauss, *Hutten's Gespräche*, 121–3; 143.

[2] Schaff, v, ii, 634.

[3] Emerton, 184.

Erasmus was easily the most famous of all the humanists, and ruled in the realm of scholarship as undisputed monarch. His was a brilliant genius, which prelates vied with scholars and princes in honouring, and to which all turned for inspiration and guidance, for a sane and safe transitional course from the medieval cloister to the intellectual light of the modern world. Among his friends and admirers were Popes, emperors, kings, nobles, prelates, scholars, and students all over Europe, and everywhere he went he was received with great honours and costly presents. Nor did any false pride prevent him from receiving these gifts—200 florins from Pope Clement VII, 400 gulden as an annuity from Charles V as an imperial counsellor, £20 from Lord Lovejoy for life, down to sweetmeats from the nuns of Cologne.[2]

He accepted and utilized all the fundamental aspirations of the Renaissance. His wide acquaintance, his extensive travels and his profound studies made him a genuine cosmopolitan in spirit and judgment.

The one supreme purpose of the mind of Erasmus was to secure the emancipation of the individual. Hence in the great conflict between the Medieval Church and organized reformation he refused to lend his influence unreservedly to one side or the other. "I seek truth," he said, "and find it at times in Catholic propositions, and at times in those of the Protestants." Through the education of the individual, by evolution and not revolution, he expected religious as well as social reform and progress. Through the influences of the new culture and by striving for internal reformation, he hoped for the gradual transformation of the Church, the disappearance of superstitions, the abolition of questionable practices such as fasts, pilgrimages, saint worship, indulgences, and ascetic penances, and the return to a simpler, purer, and more practical religion. The evils and abuses of his day he attributed to ignorance, hence he wielded his mighty pen to spread the gospel of knowledge over the world. In all his works one finds the same appeal for truth, human reason, temperate criticism, and tolerance. Open to every vibration of his age and by nature intensely temperate in his judgment of men and things, he was neither timid nor weak, but strictly neutral. His mind revolted against the narrowness of party with its vulgar and unfair excesses. In speaking of eating fish, he said : " My heart is Catholic, but my stomach is Lutheran." As he disliked fish, so he loathed the ignorant hostility to classical learning and the narrow fanaticism of the Catholic clergy. He scourged the monks, though one himself, for their stupidity, unchastity, and ignorance, and condemned their heartless ceremonialism. He thought they would love to search for a new heaven, since their evil ways and shallow arrogance would shut them out of the old heaven. In *The Praise of Folly*, he has Folly review Popes, monks, and theologians, and in terms of wit and satire paint them true to life. In common with all the humanists he longed to see the power of the obscurantist clergy broken, and replaced by an intelligent priesthood. He questioned the advisability of the temporal power of the Pope and urged men to " venerate the living and breathing picture of Christ, in the sacred books ". He wanted the Bible translated into every language, and put into the hands of every person, and said that it was a shame that thousands of educated Christians had never even read the New Testament. He advised the theologians to go to the Scriptures as the fountain source of all knowledge.

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[1] Erasmus, *Letters*, tr. by Nichols, ii, 148, 462.

[2] *Epistle*, 666.

Erasmus never intended to separate from Rome and accepted the validity of the final decision of the Church. He would suppress monasteries, put an end to the dominion of the ranting ignoramuses among the clergy, sweep away the scandalous evils and financial abuses, and agitate for a more intelligent understanding of Christianity, but he refused to attack the foundations of the Church or to attempt to remould the accepted fundamentals of theology. He disapproved of the violent measures of Luther and Zwingli, although he shared many of their doctrines. Theological questions had little interest for him, and when they aroused party passion they became odious to him. He never had any deep religious experience such as Luther and Calvin had, and at best was a moralist, whose heart and brain were absorbed in learning, and who had none of the qualities of leadership on the field of combat. Luther spoke to all the people ; Erasmus to the educated class alone. Both compelled the people to think, but Luther aroused them to action and boldly assumed the leadership. Erasmus feared that the fanaticism of the evangelical revolt would harm the cause of culture. " I abhor the evangelics," he said, " because it is through them that literature is everywhere declining ; and upon the point of perishing." Drummond sums up his position exactly : " Erasmus was in his own age the apostle of common-sense and of rational religion. He did not care for dogmas, and accordingly the dogmas of Rome, which had the consent of the Christian world were in his eyes preferable to the dogmas of Protestantism. . . . From the beginning to the end of his career he remained true to the purpose of his life, which was to fight the battle of sound learning and plain common-sense against the powers of ignorance and superstition, and amid all the convulsions of that period he never once lost his mental balance." In 1523, Luther wrote : " Erasmus has done what he was ordained to do. He has introduced the ancient languages in place of the pernicious scholastic studies. He will probably die like Moses in the land of Moab. . . . He has done enough to overcome the evil, but to lead to the land of promise is not, in my judgment, his business." In referring to his connection with the Reformation his contemporaries said : " Erasmus laid the egg and Luther hatched it."

144. *The Renaissance in Spain*

The Spanish Renaissance was influenced by Italy. Many Spanish scholars were students and professors at Bologna. Chancellor Ayala knew Boccaccio and by 1428 Dante's *Divine Comedy* was translated into Catalan. Henry of Villamo, Macios, Mendoza, and Juan de Mena had considerable local fame.

Humanism and science in Spain were encouraged by John II of Castile (1406–1454), but the tumults which followed his long reign left few traces of them. Queen Isabella was a patron of the new learning and did much to encourage it. The chief advocate of the new culture was Cardinal Ximines (1436–1517), who in 1508 established the University of Alcalá, which became the centre of learning and outrivalled the ancient University of Salamanca. Its fame for philological studies and literature attracted many students, who spread the new movement over the entire peninsula. In 1514 it gave to the world the first printed text of the New Testament in Greek, to be followed six years later by the first Polyglot Bible—the work of the great cardinal assisted by converted Jews, a Greek, and Spanish scholars. The text and notes were published in six volumes at a cost to the editor of about $125,000. "No translation," said the editor in the introduction, "can fully and exactly represent the original. . . . It is necessary, therefore . . . that we should go back to the origin of the sacred writings." The work exerted a great influence upon Biblical criticism for a century and a half, until scholars discovered and used older texts of the Bible. Antonio de Nebrija (1442–1522) spent twenty years in Italy and then returned to Spain to become the father of classical learning in the peninsula. He was deeply interested in all forms of literature and taught at Seville, Salamanca, and Alcalá. He was prosecuted by the Inquisition for pointing out the textual errors of the Vulgate, but was protected by Ximines and permitted to continue his labours. Juan de Valdes (1500–1541), a gifted critic, held that the intellect and conscience were safer guides in religious matters than the Bible, and taught something akin to Luther's justification by faith alone. In his "Dialogue between Mercury and Charon" he employed satire and ridicule to denounce the abuses in the Church, State, and society. Juan de Vergara (1492–1557) wrote elegant Latin verse and was a pioneer in historical criticism. He undertook to prepare a complete edition of the works of Aristotle, but the work was stopped by the death of his patron, Cardinal Ximines. Luis Vived (1492–1540), a student of Erasmus, travelled in England and Spanish Netherlands, and became one of the most famous teachers of his times.

The Renaissance in Spain, unlike Italy but like Germany and

England, was closely connected with religious reform. The Spaniards cared little for the abstractions of Italian Platonism and refused to surrender themselves to a voluptuous paganism. They were more deeply interested in concrete things, had a profound moral sense, possessed a deep sense of sin, and never lost their interest in theology. They were ardently attached to the Church and desired to see its power increased and its evils remedied. Had the Renaissance been utilized as fully as in Germany for a spiritual revival of Christianity great results might have been accomplished, but the Inquisition, the reactionary policy of Charles V, and the Society of Jesus suppressed all freedom of thought and put the Spanish nation decisively on the side of Catholic conservatism, and ushered in the period of intellectual decline.

In Spain and Portugal the progress of the Renaissance was less fruitful than in any other European nation. The Spaniards are not a great artistic race like the Italians and French, nor have they given the world great abstract thinkers, philosophers and theologians like the Germans and English. Nevertheless their achievements under the spirit of the Renaissance were remarkable for both their variety and their audacity. Gothic architecture gave way to the early Renaissance style of simply bewildering richness by adapting Arabic and Moorish decoration. Sculpture and the minor plastic crafts revealed a native realism of striking originality. Painting was cultivated until the work of Velazquez demonstrated that Spanish masters were the compeers of their Italian contemporaries. Certain groups of scholars accepted the Italian Renaissance and sought to refine the vernacular. The monumental work of *Don Quixote* placed Cervantes among the best exponents of the new movement and revealed the emergence of a noble, modern nation from the Middle Ages. The Spanish drama attained an eminence in the hands of Lope de Vega and Calderon, which only the English masterpieces can rival. Camoens of Portugal in the *Lusiad* was the first modern poet to compose an epic on a purely modern theme, breathing the spirit of the modern age of heroic adventures and discoveries, in the style of Virgil. The Renaissance in Spain was not injured by the false canons of a pseudo-classic taste, but possessed a powerful national originality. The slavish imitation of the ancients so common in Italy was conspicuously absent in the revival of learning in Spain. Humanism was less formal and also much less fruitful, but it championed the essentials of intellectual freedom, took the keenest delight in a normal life, and rejoiced over the rediscovery of man and the exploration of the earth as his home. In the Iberian peninsula the Renaissance took a practical turn in navigation and discovery. The voyages of Columbus and Vespucci to the New World, the rounding of the Cape by Diaz, the opening of a new sea route to India by Vasco da Gama, the conquest of Mexico by Cortes, and the seizure of Peru by Pizarro literally marked a new epoch for the human race and more decisively inaugurated modern European history than any other series of events of this period. The centre of gravity in politics and commerce was changed from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic ; Italy ceased to be the mistress of the world's trade ; and the western nations of Europe were given an unlimited field for expansion. By these discoveries the Renaissance ceased to be a revival of ancient civilization and opened up a field of opportunity in which mankind has been exercising its energies ever since. Men's eyes were opened to a new stage of life on which the new drama of modern civilization was played and their minds had outgrown medieval limitations.

145. *The Renaissance in France*

The first country in Europe to react to the influences of the Italian Renaissance was France. This was due in part to the racial affinity between the two peoples, to a similarity in artistic temperament, but mostly to the close political and ecclesiastical connection between France and Italy. During the period of the Captivity, Schism, and Reform Councils, France was the predominant influence in the Roman Church. Louis XII and Francis I spent a considerable portion of their reigns in an attempt to gain possession of the Italian provinces which they claimed. Catherine de' Medici was the queen of Henry II, and her children, Charles IX and Henry III, were Italianized Frenchmen. Thus the connection, both ecclesiastically and politically, between France and Italy from 1384 to 1589, was continuous. During that period the French passed back and forth over the Alps to Italy on military, religious, and diplomatic expeditions, while Italians went to France as courtiers, ambassadors, clergy, business men, scholars, and artists. Indeed French society took on a strong Italian colouring, and the ruder and less polished Frenchmen gladly and eagerly sat at the feet of the Italian scholars. But France lagged far behind Italy in brilliant scholarship.

While French architecture was indigenous, strictly national and characteristic of French temperament, still Italian influences were felt as early as the reign of Louis XII, who founded a school of architects with Fra Giocondo of Verona at its head, and became pronounced under the patronage of Francis I in the erection of his princely palaces. This same monarch encouraged famous Italian painters to visit France—among them Del Rosso, Primaticcio, Del Sarto, and Da Vinci—who established an Italianized school of French art. French sculpture, on the contrary, had been developed with so much originality and power that when Ponzio and Cellini went to France from Italy they found themselves outrivalled by Cousin and Pilon. Decorative sculpture and the minor arts were cultivated with such a spontaneity and freedom that foreign influences could be adopted without sacrificing native taste.

French literature quickly responded to the influences of the Italian Renaissance. De Comines' history of the expedition of Charles VIII to Naples was written in a new style and a new spirit of a new age. Villon's poetry struck a new note of realism. Towards the close of the fifteenth century the revival of learning began to affect the French vernacular with the introduction of Latinisms, but this pedantic tendency was checked by Marot, Ronsard, and the Pléiade, who sought to so utilize Italian influences that French might be raised to a level with the classics. The French humanists took up the study of Latin and Greek with enthusiasm, but translated the ancient masterpieces into the mother tongue, and thereby gave it a new pomp, richness, colour, grace, and polish unknown before. France was tremendously influenced, but not intoxicated like Italy, with humanistic scholarship. Budé (1455–1537) in Greek and Latin scholarship was the patriarch of humanism in France, and in his learning was the equal of Erasmus, although not so great an intellectual influence. William Fichet introduced "the eloquence of Rome" at Paris, and Gaguin copied Suetonius and other Latin writers. Le Fèvre Raoul wrote a history of Troy for his patron, the Duke of Bourgogne. Tifernas, Lascaris, and Hermonymus were the first teachers of Greek. Alexander of Italy lectured on Plato at Paris in 1509, and compiled a Latin-Greek lexicon, while his pupil, Vatable, published a Greek grammar. Briconnet, made Bishop of Meaux in 1516, was a humanist and patron of scholars. Lefevre, a Greek and Hebrew scholar who had studied in France, Germany and Italy, edited the works of Aristotle. John Calvin devoted himself passionately to the study of the humanities and was a master of both Latin and Greek. The very incarnation of the Renaissance in France, however, was Rabelais (1495–1555), perhaps the greatest satirist of all times, a keen critic of his own age, a man who dared to denounce tradition and assert the inherent goodness of human nature, freedom of thought, and the sufficiency of reason as a guide of faith and conduct.

In France from the outset the Renaissance allied itself with heresy and the reformation of the Church. Lefevre in his *Commentary on the Letters of St Paul* in 1512, clearly stated something akin to Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone. He had to flee from France for his radical religious beliefs. Budé urged the study of the classics in order to better understand the Bible. Briconnet laboured to secure an educated priesthood for his episcopal diocese. Bérauld enlisted Admiral Coligny and his two brothers in the cause of ecclesiastical reforms. Dolet died for his heretical ideas, Despériers became an avowed sceptic and Rabelais in his pursuit of science was charged with heresy. The Sorbonne, controlled by the conservative theologians, sought to suppress the spirit of free inquiry and in this effort had the support of the French monarchy. Outside of Paris—at Bordeaux, Bourges, Nîmes, Orleans, Toulouse, Montpellier, and particularly at Lyons—humanism flourished and joined hands with the movement for ecclesiastical reform, not through revolution but through education, as Erasmus urged. The Renaissance in France was extremely aristocratic, consequently when it incurred the enmity of the king and the hostility of the orthodox clergy because of its alliance with the Reformation, its decadence as an intellectual force began. Its religious activities were transplanted to Switzerland by Lefevre and Ferel, and it culminated in the reform movement led by Calvin at Geneva.

146. *The Renaissance in England*

The insular position of England and the temperament of the people resulted in a later reaction to the various continental movements than in any other country. Hence the English had the opportunity to observe the Renaissance before it touched their shores, and when it did arrive it came accompanied by the Reformation. Both movements had been anticipated in England by at least a century. Chaucer, who wrote his poetry under Italian influences, and Wiclif, were the forerunners of the two movements. It was not, however, until the reign of Henry VIII (1509–47) that England entered definitely upon a career of intellectual development like the Continental countries, but even then it was not received with the same instinctive sympathy as elsewhere and was slow in affecting the bulk of the people. It resembled in character the German much more than the Italian and French movements. English humanism never revealed any of those brilliant paganizing characteristics of Italy, nor did it attain the profound classical scholarship of Germany. It was eclectic rather than creative, as was true of the English Reformation, and it placed special emphasis on religious and ethical problems. Much of the modern learning popularized by English literary men was taken second hand from Continental literature. Because of this fact it must not be assumed that England was devoid of ripe and sound scholars, for men like More, Colet, Linacre, Grocyn, Ascham, Cheke, and Camden were familiar with the classics and the public schools and universities had been humanized. Nevertheless the new learning did not become a speciality in England and there was no class corresponding to the humanists in Italy, although many of the English scholars went to Italy[1] and elsewhere to study and returned imbued with the new ideas. The cosmopolitan Dutchman, Erasmus, during his three sojourns in England, exercised a tremendous influence upon the scholarship of that country. Italians like Poggio and Polidore Virgil also lived and taught in England. England enjoyed the exceptional privilege of having the masterpieces of both pagan and modern authors, as well as the Bible, translated into the vernacular during this period—an advantage enjoyed by no other nation.

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[1] In the great reform councils the English first came into direct touch with Italian humanists. Loserth, 641.

In the realm of art England borrowed little, and created less that was original. No Englishman rose to eminence in the field of sculpture, painting, or music. In literature the early English Renaissance period was one of imitation and assimilation with almost suffocating pedantry. Academies copied after those in Italy were founded. Gradually, however, the robust genius of England emancipated itself from foreign influences and revealed its native creative power in the matchless romantic epic of Spencer and in the dramas of Shakespeare, the master of all ages. Bacon became expositor of modern science. Raleigh, Drake, and Hawkins explored the seas and laid the foundations for the British Empire. Thus England, the country which the Italians in 1500 still called "barbarous", took her place among the nations that stood for the new civilization of the world, which we call modern, not as a mere imitator and follower, but as a conscious leader.

In England the Renaissance and the Reformation were merged into one movement. The champions of the new learning encountered the bitter opposition of the conservative prelates who dominated the universities and the court of the monarch. When Greek was introduced at Oxford, they preached against it as "dangerous and damnable" and called down upon their heads the condemnation of More,[1] who asked what right "had a preacher to denounce Latin of which he knew so little and Greek of which he knew nothing? How can he know theology, if he is ignorant of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin?" To Lily, the progressive schoolmaster of St Paul's, he wrote encouragingly: "No wonder your school raises a storm; it is like the wooden horse for the ruin of barbarous Troy." Fortunately, such influential men as Archbishop Warham of Canterbury, Cardinal Wolsey, Bishop Fisher of Rochester, and even the king himself were patrons of the new culture, and in consequence the study of the Scriptures soon replaced scholastic theology in the universities. Duns Scotus was neglected, Thomas Aquinas was assailed for arrogantly "attempting to define all things" and for "corrupting the whole teaching of Christ with his profane philosophy,"[2] and for teaching a theology once venerable, but which Erasmus said had become "almost dumb, poor, and in rags". Colet made a vigorous appeal for a thoroughgoing reformation of the abuses so widespread among the clergy and narrowly escaped trial for heresy. The wit and keen satire of Erasmus powerfully aided the movement to purify the Church. More sought to correct the evils in the Church, but died a martyr of loyalty to the old faith. These three men had no thought of leading a schism with Rome. The learned and devout Bishop Fisher also died on the block rather than countenance the break with the Pope. Nevertheless the labours of these men for a new education and for an internal reformation of the Church led directly to the English Reformation which began under Henry VIII.

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[1] Froude, *Erasmus*, 139, gives the letter.

[2] Ib.

147. *Conclusions*

In summing up the influence of the Renaissance on the decline of the medieval Church, it may be observed, in the first place, that this complex movement which implied a new perspective of the world and human nature, a new idea of man's duties and destiny, and a new conception of every sphere of thought and activity, originated outside of the official recognition of the Church, and in its very nature was fundamentally opposed to the theories of the Medieval Church. The mental and moral ideas produced in large measure by the revival of classical learning were diametrically opposed to medieval modes of thinking and feeling. The political absolutism of the medieval Papacy was challenged and defeated by the new forces that appeared in the national states. The spiritual absolutism of the priesthood was assailed by the spirit of free inquiry and scientific criticism. The dogmas of the Church were put on the defensive by the critical study of the Scriptures in the original languages and by the investigation of ecclesiastical history from the sources. Men insisted upon the right of private judgment concerning those grave concerns of life which medieval theologians had insisted were too sacred to be questioned and must be accepted, therefore, without question. Thus gradually the voice of the Medieval Church lost its authority over millions of men and women in Western Europe, who finally seceded from the sovereignty of Rome and set up independent ecclesiastical organizations.

A second effect of the Renaissance which demoralized and undermined the Medieval Church, was the pronounced scepticism of many persons who did not hesitate to accept ecclesiastical offices although they disbelieved the cardinal teachings of the Church. The Italian humanists, swept off their feet by the study of Greek and Roman civilization, in many instances accepted the pagan attitude towards life in their indifference to the destiny of the soul, in stressing sensuality, and in glorifying the physical world. Gabrielle de Salô, a physician of Bologna, discredited Christianity and taught that Christ was a skilful deceiver, who performed his miracles through the influence of astrology.[1] Codrus Urceus, a professor in the University of Bologna, declared that all the talk about a future life was mere guess-work and valuable only in frightening old women.[2] The historian Guicciardini, who for years found lucrative service with the Popes, asserted that notwithstanding all the efforts of the theologians and philosophers to explain the supernatural men were still in the dark on all religious questions, and that the so-called miracles instead of proving the truth of religion really demonstrated their untruth. Marsuppini of Arezzo made no secret of his disdain for Christianity, and his preference for classic paganism. Such men as Poggio, Valla, Filelfo, Ariosto, Aretino and Machiavelli were either indifferent to the Christian system as taught by the Medieval Church, or secretly despised it. They substituted culture for Christianity, art and eloquence for holiness, and secretly sacrificed to the gods of Greece and Rome rather than to the God of the Church. Pietro Bembo, secretary to Leo X, and later a cardinal, advised Sadoleto not to read the Pauline letters because their unclassical Greek would injure his purity of style. The story was circulated that Leo X remarked to Bembo: "Every age knows how useful the fable of Christ has been to us and ours." To sneer and laugh at everything holy and sacred became the fashion and the badge of a freethinker. According to John Francis Pico, nephew of Pico of Mirandola, one of the Popes disbelieved in God and another questioned man's immortality. Under the guise of outward conformity, all varieties of thought were tolerated and the most heterodox opinions were freely expressed among the various groups of humanists. However conscientious these radicals were in their views regarding religion, few of them were heroic enough to defy the Inquisition and to face the penalty of death at the stake. Most of them insured their good standing in the Church by accepting the consoling rites of the Church before overtaken by death. Erasmus clearly saw the danger of this rationalistic propagandism, when he said in 1516: "I fear that with the study of ancient literature, the old paganism will reappear." The rationalistic, pagan tendencies so conspicuous in Italy revealed themselves north of the Alps in schisms and heresies. These divergencies from medieval orthodoxy did not go unchallenged, but were attacked by powerful and brilliant champions of the Church. Indeed it may be said that a large majority of the rationalists in Italy accepted the essentials of Christianity, while refusing to subscribe to superfluous dogmas. Nevertheless the result of these extremely liberal views was to deliver a blow at medieval theology from which the old Church never fully recovered.

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[1] Rossi, *Guicciardini*, Bologna, 1896.

[2] Schaff, v, ii, 593.

A third result of the Renaissance was to specify more emphatically than ever the evils and abuses in the Church, to show the necessity for reformation, and to insist upon the modification of objectionable dogmas. Dante dreamed of a regeneration of the Church within and with passionate invective scourged Pope and priest, but defended the Papacy and the priesthood. Petrarch in fierce satire exposed the corruptions and degeneracy of the Papal court at Avignon, yet served the Church as a loyal son. Chaucer depicted the mercenary priests and monks who cared more for money than for the salvation of souls. From their day onward the critics of the Church with keen weapons of biting sarcasm, mocking exaggerations, and passionate condemnation, held Popes, clergy and monks, as well as rites, ceremonies and doctrines up to public scorn and ridicule. Valla employed scientific criticism and the truth of history to abolish the foundations of the temporal power of the Papacy and the authenticity of the Apostles' Creed. Italian, German, Spanish, French, Dutch, and English humanists all united in the general European assault on the Medieval Church—upon monasticism, scholasticism, superstition, priestcraft, and Papal absolutism. The Renaissance joined hands with the various reform movements until it was swallowed up and completely eclipsed by the work of Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and the English reformers. In this way it was responsible, both directly and indirectly, for the loss of most of Northern Europe to the Medieval Church.

The Roman Church, after surviving the disintegrating influences of the Great Schism, the tremendous efforts made in the Great Reform Councils for a radical reconstruction of its constitution, the decentralizing effects of feudalism and the perilous competition for world power with the Teutonic emperors, found itself confronted by the new forces and new problems of the Renaissance. The Medieval Church had survived in its conflict with the Greco-Roman-Germanic world, first, because it stood for a more civilized and humane idea of life and human relations and, secondly, because it was willing to compromise. Now that it was confronted by another more civilized and more strictly human conception of man and the world in the new age of the Renaissance would it compromise with and adapt itself to the new conditions ? That was the great question which confronted the Church during the latter part of the fifteenth and the first part of the sixteenth century. Upon the answer depended the unity of Western Christendom under the headship of the Roman Pope. Instead of measuring up to its opportunity, however, the Church sought to rescue itself by arousing the forces of conservatism and reaction. Papal absolutism united with monarchical absolutism and sought by force to recover the ground lost through the Renaissance and the Reformation. The Inquisition and the Order of Jesus—two Spanish institutions planted on Roman soil—were employed to save the Church from disintegration. The Council of Trent (1545–1563) reformed many abuses, but affirmed the doctrines of medieval Christianity, strengthened Papal supremacy and checked progressive tendencies.

CHAPTER XXII

THE PRIVILEGED AND THE UNPRIVILEGED CLASSES

148. *Social and Economic Changes*

THE fact has been commonly overlooked that this age of religious and intellectual readjustments was accompanied by social and industrial changes of a radical character. Productive scholarship has been directed to the explanation of the Renaissance and the Reformation, while the revolutionizing social and industrial transition that accompanied them and in a large measure caused them has been all but neglected. Through action and reaction all European civilization was undergoing a fundamental transformation from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century in social and economic ideas and institutions, and these significant changes, both directly and indirectly, had a positive effect upon the problem of this book, namely, the decline in the power and influence of the Medieval Church.

A general survey of these two centuries brings into strong relief the following political, social, and economic forces that were changing the Middle Ages to the modern world, and hence are necessary to explain the disruption of the unity of the old Church :

1. The feudal system was breaking down and gradually disappearing. This dissolution necessitated the rearrangement of all human relationships in the life of the various European peoples—political, social, economic, and ecclesiastical. Governmental control was widened territorially, centralized in authority, and to some degree made co-operative. Free, self-governing towns sprang up. Social extremes were not so pronounced ; the nobles lost some of their power and the serfs slowly gained a measure of freedom. The localized industrial system of feudalism was expanded into national and international trade. The old Church, itself to a considerable extent feudalized, was confronted by the task of readjusting its theories and services to meet these new conditions.

2. Modern national states on a monarchical basis, like England, France, and Spain, were emerging with the subsidence of the feudal régime. This concentration of political power resulted in the curtailment of the prerogatives of the nobles; the encouragement of the middle class to a greater degree of self-assertion in the free towns and communes throughout Western Europe; the improvement of the condition of the peasants and labourers; and the nationalization of industry and commerce. Just as the towns were obtaining charters guaranteeing their liberties, so France and England were developing the parliamentary system of national government. The Pope and the clergy found their claim to universal secular control seriously threatened by these new political organizations.

3. The conquests of the Turks in Western Asia, in Northern Africa, and in South-eastern Europe cut off European trade with the Orient, and led to new geographical explorations and discoveries; and to inventions like the mariner's compass and gunpowder. A new trade route to the Far East was found around the southern end of Africa. America was opened up as a new world of wealth, trade, and colonization for the more adventurous nations. These exploits were the occasion for the rise of sea powers like Spain, Portugal, France, Holland, and England. Trade and commerce were revolutionized and the European states were confronted by a whole series of new economic questions. There was a general shifting of trading centres from the Mediterranean to Western and Northern Europe, and a consequent change in the political power and wealth of European peoples. The earth grew smaller; the individual man larger. The social system was affected in a thousand different ways. The eyes of Europe were no longer enveloped in the cowl of the Middle Ages, but looked abroad upon the fair world and found it good.

4. The business of Europe comprehended in the words commerce, trade and industry was fundamentally altered—in fact revolutionized. During the Middle Ages industry was so localized that each little village was an independent economic unit which produced practically everything necessary for its existence. Only luxuries were imported from distant points. As towns sprang up along rivers, on the sea coasts, and on the customary routes of travel, an inter-city and international trade arose. With the rise of national states

national industries were encouraged, and after 1492 world trade began to develop. This economic evolution powerfully modified social institutions and relationships, widened interest in material things, and produced forces which challenged the supremacy of the Papacy. In the Middle Ages land was the only economic basis for wealth. The growth of towns and the rise of national states encouraged the formation of corporations to run factories, carry on commerce, and conduct mining enterprises. To assist these business enterprises and to facilitate a wider trade, banking institutions were established, and thus a new economic basis for wealth, namely money, was created. It is difficult to comprehend the far-reaching effects of these new factors in the civilization of Europe, because historians in dealing with this period have too commonly neglected them, more particularly in the history of the Church.

149. *Status of Royalty*

Socially Europe at the close of the fifteenth century was still divided into clearly defined classes, each with its special sphere of rights and duties, each with its well-defined prerogatives and privileges, and each with its peculiar costume and mannerisms. Although these classes had undergone many changes during the two preceding centuries, still they were differentiated in strong relief in the life and the activities of the day.

Royalty stood at the top of the social pyramid and exercised a tremendous influence over the other classes. By a process of the survival of the strongest, wealthiest, and shrewdest, the kings, in a conflict with the aristocracy had gained an unprecedented ascendancy in England, France, and Spain. In Germany, Italy, and the minor states the princes claimed royal rank and on a smaller scale exercised full regal prerogatives. Thus all Europe was brought under the dominion of a group of rulers who formed a powerful and an exclusive class who with all the members of their families were extremely jealous of their blue blood, took advantage of every opportunity to increase their authority, elaborated the theory of the divine origin of government, and stoutly defended their rights against every invasion. Among the chief princes of Germany were thirty dukes, an archduke, four landgraves, and a large number of counts.[1]

150. *The Nobility Losing their Power and Influence*

The nobility, numerous as they were, and scattered all over Europe, formed the most powerful class in Europe. They owned most of the land not possessed by the kings, the Church, or the free towns. Their number was ever increasing (1) by the transmission of noble blood to all children in France and Germany; (2) by the ennobling acts of kings for special services; (3) by the creation of offices carrying noble titles and often hereditary; and (4) by the sale of letters and patents of nobility. The nobles monopolized practically all of the most lucrative appointments in the State and the Church. In Germany and Italy they retained their full feudal rights. Although they had lost most of their political rights in France, Spain, and England, nevertheless they still clung tenaciously to their other feudal privileges, both social and personal. In the national governments they played an important rôle and controlled the House of Lords in England, the Second Estate in the French Estates General, the Cortes in Spain, and the Diet in Germany. Their castles were seen on every prominent hill and promontory in Western Europe and the masses of the people constituted their retainers, and supporters. There were all sorts and degrees of nobility from the mighty prince, who might lay claim to royal descent, down to the poor noble who was little more than a lordly country farmer. In the social scale ranging from the peasant to the monarch, the nobility occupied the rank between the kings and the middle class. According to blood, the nobles were divided sharply into the old and the new; according to rank, into high and low; and according to property, into rich and poor. Thousands of the poverty-stricken knights and nobles either had to take to farming like peasants, or sell their lives as soldiers, or enter the universities to prepare themselves for civil positions and service in the Church, or become highway robbers.[2]

In the year 1507 the Venetian ambassador, Quirini, reported that the princes and nobles of Germany "are in the habit of leaving their principality to the eldest son and then providing for the rest with other territories, bishoprics, or ecclesiastical benefices; so that if a duke has ten sons, all demand to be dukes like their father, and the result is that there are an infinite multitude of counts, dukes, and margraves. . . . Consequently the greater part of the temporal princes are always ready to descend into Italy to provide for their sons, some their brothers or nephews, with principalities. . . . The princes all live in abundance, but give more attention to drinking than anything else. They are miserably dressed, nor do they affect much ceremony in their courts."

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[1] Report of the Venetian ambassador, Quirini, quoted in Robinson, *Readings*, ii, 32.

[2] Schulte, ii, 534.

"The knights are accustomed to live in some castle far from a town, or at the court of some prince, or among the mountains in solitary regions. They live and dress wretchedly, hate the burghers, and are poor, but so proud that nothing in the world would induce them to engage in commerce. They are devoted to fighting; and when that is wanting they have nothing to do but to hunt or to set to plundering on the highways. Were it not for severe repression, no one could travel safely in any part of Germany. Even as it is, in Franconia, where there are a great many of these gentlemen, the roads are very insecure." [1]

The public deportment of the nobles was so coarse and vulgar that the preachers, poets and statesmen of the day freely criticized their conduct. The highest nobles, it was said, acted like low-born peasants. De Comines' *Memoirs* mentioned a Rhenish knight who, when visiting Brussels, put his dirty boots on the bed. The Duke of Leignitz in 1504 ran about in his bare feet. Even the Emperor Frederick III kicked the doors open with his boot.[2]

The economic revolution of the fifteenth century induced many of the nobles to exchange their feudal dues and service for fixed money rents, but this substitution soon left them with an insufficient income to maintain adequately their dignity and prestige. Hence they were soon surpassed in wealth by the burghers who had come to monopolize industry. This condition produced much hostility between the merchants and the nobles and led to frequent petty wars.[3]

The younger sons of the nobility practically monopolized the most lucrative offices in the Church, although there were many notable exceptions. Whole monasteries, called "free-cloisters", were composed exclusively of the noble-born. From the year 900 to 1500, out of the 166 archbishops who ruled over Mainz, Trier, Cologne, and Magdeburg, 134 were nobles. Out of the 1,027 bishops who were appointed to bishoprics in the archbishoprics of Mainz and Cologne from the tenth to the sixteenth century, 601 were Freiherren, 116 more were probably Freiherren, 126 were the sons of the clergy, 22 were of burgher rank, 5 were peasants, 5 were foreigners, and the origin of 152 is unknown. The number of the Freiherren increased by centuries from 44 to 128 and the sons of the clergy from 2 to 44.[1] At St Gall all of the 54 monks except one were noblemen. Even members of princely and royal houses accepted positions in the Church. In the eleventh century three brothers who were counts of Walbeck were bishops, and four of the counts of Berg became bishops in the twelfth century. From that time on until the Reformation this tendency became quite common. In Germany it was estimated that 39 per cent of the male nobles and 30½ per cent of the noble-women were celibates. As a result many of the noble houses died out entirely or were greatly weakened. An insatiable greed for ecclesiastical benefices with big incomes prevailed. Luitpold von Rätteln who died in 1316 possessed eleven benefices and the Count of Urach-Fürstenberg had seven parishes under his control.[2] Freiherr Wikbold von Holte in 1296 was dean of the cathedral at Cologne, provost of the church of St Mary in Aachen, and held canonical benefices in Cologne, Münster, and Hugarde. Gottfried von Waldeck was canon in six chapters and had many other privileges. The uncle of King Rudolph owned fifteen benefices and secured a dispensation from caring for them.[3]

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[1] Quoted in Robinson, *Readings*, ii, 36. [2] Bezold, 38. [3] Ibid., 40.

The contempt into which the nobles had fallen in the eyes of the intelligent and observing classes is shown by the following contemporary comment :—

> "The name of the nobleman only remains, and nothing of the reality in those who are called noble. It is the shell without the kernal but full of worms—an egg without the yolk

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[1] Schulte, i, 3, 11, 28, 62, 67.

[2] Ibid., 107, 260–79.

[3] Ibid., 285–6. See John XXII's bull "Execrabilis" in 1317, which limited the number of benefices.

—no virtue, no wisdom, no piety, no love for the country, no interest in the people, no moderation. They boast of their names, not of their deeds. . . . They are full of unchastity, wantonness, and scorn, and more devoted to other vices than the rest of the people. . . . The fame of these knights is explained by their ornamental costumes and their fine linen and silk clothes with which they are hooked together and fitted. . . . They are cowards in battle, but very brave at the table. If possible they will not work and shirk every exercise—hence they have become weaklings. They excel others not in virtue and wisdom, but in eating, drinking, gambling, immorality and boasting, in fine adornments of gold and silver for both men and women. When driven to it by necessity, they turn robbers, and are a greedy and unruly lot, oppressive to the poor and the Church. Germany would be much better off without these tyrannical centaurs! Oh! that Germany might be in reality a free state like Switzerland!" The poorer classes of nobles were forced to borrow, like the king, from the rich burghers, whose income was much larger than that of either the noble or the monarch.[1] The aristocracy, particularly in France, were attracted to the courts of the king and the wealthy barons, where they became parasites by habit and found paths to fortune in appointments to office and in advantageous marriages; where they squandered their time in banquets, tournaments, hunts and love affairs; and where the strictest attention was given to ceremonies, etiquette and luxurious dress![2]

151. *The Clergy as a Privileged Class*

The clergy formed a distinct privileged class that shared the rule of Europe with kings, nobles, and free cities and thus exercised a tremendous influence on the social and economic institutions. According to the theory of the Church, they were not citizens of any country, but owed absolute allegiance to the Pope. The secular authorities, however, denied this theory and sought to subject the clergy to the jurisdiction of the State. Traditionally the clergy constituted a very democratic body—all were priests—any worthy man might become a priest by ordination—and advancement was based solely upon merit and ability, but in actual practice nearly all of the more lucrative positions in the Church were monopolized by the nobility without much regard to character or fitness for the office. The clergy like the nobility were sharply divided into two classes: the higher clergy such as the archbishops, bishops, and abbots, and the lower clergy, who were the common priests and came from the people. These two classes constituted the secular clergy as distinguished from the regular clergy, who were the monks and nuns. When it is remembered that the clergy in numerous instances were royal advisers and counsellors of princes and nobles; that they largely dominated the cultural and educational systems of the day; and that they guided the entire life of the masses of the people, it may be realized what an important part they played in the civilization of Western Europe.

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[1] Geiler, von K. in his *Narrenschiffes*, quoted in Schulte, ii, 529; John Agr., lxix, 33, quoted in Schultz, ii, 533.

[2] Lavisse, IV, ii, 168 sqq.

In France the Hundred Years War (1337–1453) reduced the clergy to dire extremities. Their establishments, rarely fortified, were repeatedly sacked and often absolutely destroyed. The incomes and tithes on which they lived were reduced to nothing. Many of the curés of the country benefices and establishments had scarcely enough to eat. The clergy made noble efforts to rebuild their churches and monasteries and for that purpose secured much money from the pious and faithful. In many instances law-suits were instituted to recover ecclesiastical property. But all the damage could not be repaired and the misery inflicted on the clergy left permanent results. The French Church never recovered the material power it had enjoyed before the war.[1]

The Great Schism in the Church, which covered forty years of this same period, further demoralized the French clergy. The revenues of bishops, abbots, and chapters having been enormously reduced, these higher ecclesiastical officials sought to recuperate their incomes by uniting benefices and the entire Church suffered by this pluralism. Favourite prelates got the largest number of big benefices. Most bishops were non-residents who squandered their time at the royal court. The Archbishop of Rheims seldom visited either Rémais or

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[1] Denifle, *La désolation des églises, monastires et hôpitaux en France, pendant la guerre de Cent Ans.*, 1897. Cf. Clemanges, *Decorrupto ecclesiae statu.*

Mende of which he was bishop. The Cardinal d'Estouteville was Archbishop of Rouen, bishop of three different dioceses, abbot of four abbeys and three priories—yet he lived in Italy! Since the bishop ordained the priests, absenteeism prevented the recruiting of the local clergy to so great a degree that many country parishes had no priests. To make matters worse the rural parishes were often rented out to non-residents. In this way many localities were robbed of both material resources and moral and spiritual leadership. Many abbeys had no abbots, priories were closed, or secularized. In some instances powerful burghers seized the monasteries, while others were deserted. The celebrated abbey of Moissac with 120 monks in the thirteenth century had but twenty in 1449. The monastery of Longpont could support only the abbot and three monks and was deserted entirely during most of the period of the war. The true type of medieval monasticism, like other medieval institutions, died out in the fifteenth century, ruined, disorganized, and sterilized by the prolonged conflict in arms. Reform abbots were extremely rare and found an invincible resistance to all their efforts. The contemporary accounts of the immorality of the clergy were not exaggerated. The bishops led in notorious vices and scandals. The richest ecclesiastic of the day, Cardinal d'Estouteville's life was far from edifying. The war and the Schism infected and hardened the heart of the priest. Often he became a merchant or usurer and was familiar with all the vices and violences of the times. Libertinage was so rampant among the clergy that many persons urged marriage as the only solution. Many of the clergy became vagabonds and preyed upon the credulity of the people. The admirable system of charity, so well developed during the Middle Ages, was well-nigh destroyed. During the Schism the bishopric of Albi was occupied again and again by one of the two rival claimants and thus the diocese was in a constant state of bloodshed and war. The feud did not end until one of the two claimants died in 1462. Passing judgment on the whole period it must be said that the Church in France set an example of coarseness, immorality, and licentiousness.[1]

The Church in Germany was not subject to the disintegrating and demoralizing influences of a prolonged national war as was France. But the Great Schism wrought great havoc and every ill of the day was charged up to it. The chronicles, letters, and popular songs of the latter part of the fourteenth and early part of the fifteenth century reflect the character and activities of the clerical classes. In 1507 there were in Germany five archbishops, twenty-five bishops, twenty abbots, five masters of religious orders and fifteen priors who as princes of the Empire combined spiritual and temporal powers.[1]

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[1] Lavisse, IV, ii, 177 sqq.

The bishops were divided into two classes—the incompetent worldly-minded prelates, who constituted a large majority and were severely criticized; and those of good character and spirituality, who were so exceptional that they were highly praised. Words were not spared in condemning the evil ways of the bad bishops; and the general opinion seemed to be that as a class the higher clergy were far from ideal. The Bishop Simon of Sternberg in Paderborn scarcely said two masses during his whole rule. Many were ignorant and illiterate, and called " unlearned in the papal arts " and " simple in letters ". Some had not even been consecrated, hence turned the duties of the office over to subordinates called " Weibischöfe ", who were even less learned than the bishops. The burghers of Lüttich protested against this practice.[2] The usurpation of appointments by the Pope for financial and political ends was responsible for the appearance everywhere of unconsecrated and poorly qualified bishops. The old right of the chapter to elect the bishop was almost entirely lost, and even where the prerogative was still exercised, money determined the choice.[3] The youth of the bishops was commented upon, and such phrases as " young in years ", " young and wild," " an ignorant youth," were quite common, while many lacked that steadiness and dignity demanded by the office and rank. Only contempt was shown for bishops who were plain and simple, or " chicken-hearted ", or " lacking in courage ", or wanting in shrewdness and wisdom, or who acted before an overlord " like a schoolboy before his teacher ". Such weaklings were very severely criticized and their bishoprics were commonly spoken of as being " virtually vacant ". Gluttony was a common failing and a certain Strassburg bishop was spoken of as a gormandizer " who ate at one meal one goose and one capon ".

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[1] Report of the Venetian Ambassador, Quirini, quoted in Robinson, *Readings*, ii, 32.

[2] Théremin, *Beiträge zur offentlichen Meinung über Kirche und Staat in der städlichen Geschichtesschreibung Deutschlands von* 1349–1415, Halle, 1909, 26.

[3] Ibid., 27.

The reason why so little was said of the spiritual activities of the bishops is because they were not spiritual princes alone but also secular. Consequently most of them thought only of their political obligations and opportunities for personal advantage. Since the bishops were an important factor in the feudal system, public opinion demanded strong men with administrative ability and even military qualifications. Profound regret was felt if the newly appointed bishop " according to the rule of the age was not an expert in knightly accomplishments and in war " and the priests as well as the people rejoiced at the election of a warrior-bishop.[1] If a bishop could not protect the very clergy from whom he received his own living he was despised as unworthy and a " useless man ". Since the nobles held an unwarlike bishop in contempt, his diocese would be far more subject to robbery, fire, sword, and murder than if war was waged. Under the militaristic feudal system the bishops, even if they would, could not always avoid war, and indeed many of them gloried in it. Those who boldly and successfully defended their rights and protected their constituencies on the battlefield were praised by their contemporaries for " wisdom and ability ". Thus Kuno von Falkenstein, " the pious German," was lauded as " a spiritual prince whose courageous stability was well known ". " Many were strenuous, unshakable, lovers of truth, righteous, upright in all dealings, good and beloved by the people." [2] They ruled for the benefit of the Church as " wise, skilled and able in worldly affairs " and " with wisdom, assurance and caution ". Many left behind them at death a united and devoted lot of priests, whose love of country would not permit them to tolerate during the Schism a double election or even a contest.

The good bishops called forth unstinted approbation from contemporaries. One was " humble, industrious and earnest in God's service " ; another " even consecrates the priests and churches and does other things which a bishop should do " ; another " always preached to the people, improved his bishopric and built many churches, so that the Church and the province had greatly improved during his lifetime" and yet he was a worldly man who was accustomed to be at the courts of the princes, danced, and was given to a worldly life.[1] Others were spoken of as "taking pleasure in God's service", "well-informed in canon law," "god-fearing," "religious" and "moral". Of Adolf von Cologne it was said: "He gave up the bishopric for the sake of a maiden whom he took to wife and for the lordship of Cleve which he soon received."[2] In some instances the burghers went to the chapter and begged the election of a bishop who would consider the needs of the district—"a wise lord who would benefit the country and God's house." There was great rejoicing when the new bishop "knew the condition of the country and befriended the city". Hope was frequently expressed that the new appointee would "correct the mistakes of his predecessor" or "improve the injuries of his predecessors". When militant bishops went too far, broke treaties, and intrigued against archbishops and other bishops, they were soundly denounced as "well-grounded in tricks and roguery", fickle, unreliable, and untruthful. Of one it was said: "He changes his word as quickly as a man can change it and makes yes, no, and no, yes," so often that nobody believes or respects him. Others were praised for always labouring for the peace and prosperity of their dioceses, for trying to convert enemies into friends, for uniting princes and nobles in compacts for "land-peace", for attempting to break up highway robbery, etc. These fortunate conditions usually lasted only till the death of the worthy prelates when the old evils returned.[3]

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[1] Théremin, 28.

[2] Ibid., 31.

The loudest complaints against the bishops were occasioned by financial abuses. To wage the interminable wars large sums of money and military supplies were needed. The glittering courts with large retinues, hunting parties, tournaments, and other forms of entertainment required large sums. Medieval hospitality, which provided for ladies and gentlemen, animals and servants, was very costly. Large gifts had to be made to the poor and the Papal court was continually clamouring for money. Hence the bishops were constantly striving by both legal and illegal methods to increase their incomes and thereby aroused widespread opposition. Many were so hard pressed for funds that they borrowed money and even mortgaged their bishoprics. Any available asset was seized without restitution. The lower ranks of the clergy were threatened or wheedled into paying larger sums than were customary.[1] All sorts of sharp bargains were made to bring money into their pockets. The Bishop of Magdeburg permitted the Emperor to take a castle and secretly received his commission for the transaction. Offices vacated by death, or the pest, were sold to the best advantage. Many cloisters were so impoverished that they lost their property. The lower clergy were taxed with " unusual expenses " so that the chronicler said that it would have been better " si de bonis ecclesiae secundum posse benefecisset et accipere munera a subjectis non canonice abmisisset ".[2] Lands and castles given by bequest were transferred and sold by one bishop after another until the bishop who was threatened with bankruptcy at last fled from his subjects " miserably and shamefacedly " to another bishopric taking with him in the form of movable property everything he could lay his hands on, thus " carrying out of the country much property ". When Adolf von Cologne left his diocese, " one found not so much as a tablecloth, nor a bottle of wine in Rolandseck ". Even the sacred places and relics had to be guarded or they would have been carried off. The Bremen council found it necessary to order that silver plate could not be taken out of the city. Furthermore the fleeing bishop borrowed all he could before he absconded.[3] To make matters worse the new bishop, failing to find the usual treasures and seeing the bishopric completely despoiled, resigned after a few months to seek a richer field for operation. No wonder the poor subjects who had to bear the burdens of this practice hated those who robbed the land and brought so much misery, and denounced the bishop as " more of a wolf and a hireling than a shepherd, for he has cut the wool off with the hide ".[4]

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[1] Théremin, 28. [2] Ibid., 26. [3] Ibid., 32.

Occasionally upright bishops, who were honest and economical, " with God's help and care brought the bishoprics out of debt," bought back the alienated lands, castles and villages, and made the house of God " rich in goods and villages ". But such prelates were very scarce and too often their praiseworthy efforts only supplied a grasping successor with another good opportunity. As a result of these conditions many cities gained freedom from the jurisdiction of the bishops, but the burghers were always on guard lest the bishops in some manner would rob them of their liberties and privileges. The Magdeburgers stubbornly resisted paying for the archbishop's pallium, but the Pope threatened them with the loss of their freedom and put them under the ban, so they cashed up.[1] Konrad of Mainz protected the property of the city and citizens against the king himself.[2] In general a distrust of the bishop prevailed in the cities, often the gates were closed against him, and even war was waged against him. Augsburg had to promise the bishop " 60 Fass Wein und 20 Ballen Gut ", but since he divided the property with Duke Stephen of Bavaria, the citizens denounced him for his betrayal of the city's trust as a swindler, " trustless and honourless." [3] This hostility between the burghers and the bishop also involved the city clergy, who were subject to him and therefore had to take his part. In anger the city officials sought to destroy the prerogatives of the clergy, especially their exemption from taxation and customs. Augsburg declared that " all priests, abbots, and nuns must become citizens " and be subject to taxation, if they remained in the city. Those who left the city had their property confiscated and a court in Ulm upheld the validity of this law. In Breslau, Lüttich, and Magdeburg the clergy were driven out and their property seized. In Halberstadt they left voluntarily but their possessions were still appropriated.[4] Special hostility was shown towards bishops who were foreigners unacquainted with local conditions and determined to rule in their own way.

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[1] Thérémin, 33. [2] Ibid., [3] Ibid., 34. [4] Ibid., 34.

By 1385 the Swabian and Rhenish leagues of cities had reached the height of their power and " began to oppress the priests, the foundations and cloisters, and all ecclesiastical persons. They demanded taxes and money from them for their soldiers out of the ecclesiastical gifts and benefices " until it became unendurably excessive. The Mainz chronicle declared that the " altogether wicked league ", having succeeded at times in defeating the knights and lords, became so overconfident that it despised the noble lords, followed its own will, and plotted to destroy the clergy and reduce all ecclesiastical liberty. Encouraged by these victories, the laity sought to hinder the clergy buying and selling and to force them to bear all the burdens of the city government and thus treated them worse than Jews.[1] Consequently the clergy suffered persecution, illness, and injustice of the gravest kind, which was an "outrageous injury to ecclesiastical freedom". The government of Mainz put two monks in prison. Because the preaching friars resisted the city council, they were punished for "affrontery". The Swiss punished the clergy with taxes worse than the heathen. The hatred against the priests in Lüttich was so great that all the priests were murdered. In Stralsund three priests were burned. In Magdeburg a dean, "a mischievous man", was accused of fomenting a quarrel which resulted unfavourably to the city, and was taken out by the people and lynched without a trial. In consequence the city was put under the ban and absolution was delayed as long as possible by the canons, who bore the reputation in Germany of secretly fomenting trouble between the cities and the clergy, of serving as spies and of allying themselves with the clergy against the municipal authorities. It was customary in these conflicts for the clergy to use the ban and interdict to punish the cities, but the practice became so common that these ecclesiastical weapons lost their effectiveness. The city officials complained to the king that these curses were pronounced against them for the merest trifles.[2] The small heed given to these punishments is shown in the poetic chronicle in these words :—

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[1] Théremin, 25. [2] Ibid., 37. [3] Ibid., 39. [4] Ibid., 40.

> "Ab niemer messe gesungen wurde
> Das wär mir gar ein lichte burde.
> Ich walde nit einen heller geben
> Umb alles singen unde lesen
> Das mocht in drisig jaren gewesen
> Ze Würzburg hie in unsrer stat
> Wir essen und trinken dannoch sat
> Ungesungen unde ungelesen—
> Wir wollen unser selbes wesen." [3]

As a rule the burghers gave little attention to either civil or canon law, or indeed to either secular or ecclesiastical punishment, because, it was explained, they were "steeped in heresy". The citizens of Worms would rather fight than obey, and gave money rewards to the peasants and others who imprisoned their priests, who complained that they were treated worse than Saracens, since advantage was taken of the slightest incident to subject them to persecution. If the clergy remained in a city under the interdict, they were forced to perform religious services, and in case they refused they were knocked down. The monks in one instance were literally walled in and closely watched so that they would starve to death.[1] Usually the clergy, fearing the tyranny of the city council, would flee from a city about to be inflicted with ecclesiastical censure. In a few instances the friars took the part of the people against the clergy. Notwithstanding the disregard of the cities of excommunication and interdict, for industrial and economic reasons, efforts were commonly made to shorten the term. The damaged houses of the priests were rebuilt and "untold money" was paid to appease the Church authorities. Hatred against the clergy did not disappear, however, with the removal of the ban, hence when the priests returned some of them were murdered. In Lüttich 300 of them were beaten, and in Stralsund three were burned alive.[2]

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[1] Théremin, 41.
[2] Ibid., 42.
[3] Ibid., 43.

"Lasst uns stifte plündern
Das bringt uns kleinen schaden
Der edelnwollen wir entlanden
Allir getreide und ir win
Das muss unser eigen sin."[3]

In the intermittent warfare with which the country was afflicted, churches and cloisters were sacked and burned like other property. If by chance they were spared, the fate of ecclesiastical edifices in Heilbronn in 1388 might await them: after the departure of the enemy, the citizens went out and pillaged the churches and cloisters because they did not want the priests to fare better than the other people.

During the period of the Schism the condition of the Church in Germany was unspeakably inefficient and corrupt. "Masses were seldom read—early masses still more infrequently—every one in a spiritual office did as he pleased—and everything was thrown into confusion". In the cloister the monks frequently abolished the old rule and lived disorderly lives.

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[1] Théremin, 44.

[2] Ibid., 44.

[3] Ibid.; Liliencron, *Volkslieder* i, n. 40, v, 513.

When an abbot sought to re-establish the rule, the monks resented it as a punishment.[1] The right of consecration was bought and used for fraud and cheating; and blatant pretenders claimed to possess the power to consecrate priests. A certain man named Jacob even gave permission to the laity to say masses and offer the holy body of the Lord.[2] The clergy were neglected and seldom visited by the bishops, who were either incompetent or indifferent, or too busy establishing their authority against rivals whose orders were countermanded. In imitation of the secular princes and burghers, the clergy frequently discarded their ecclesiastical dress and the tonsure, and " danced and enjoyed a worldly life ". The death of a canon after dancing was charged up to the judgment of God. Few reforms were attempted and even those bore little result because strenuously opposed by the clergy and at times, as in the case of Paderborn, also by the laity. It was a matter of common gossip that Albrecht von Querfurt had many women " as long as he was well " ; that the bishop of Lüttich " lived unchastely with many women and maids " until too ill; that in Berne the " priests' girls " were imprisoned and " set the whole city on fire " ; and that most of the Popes were guilty of open immorality.[3] The barefoot friars had a bad reputation all over the country and in Strassburg the city council declared that they were twice in disgrace. In that city they heard confessions at St Clare and conducted worship, but the people were afraid to go to confessional or to attend services because their reputation was so bad.[4] A folksong ran as follows :—

" Es mag an schaden nicht ergan
under so vil pfaffen,
wan sie haut je ze schafen
mit frowen und auch mit meiden
drum wollen wir sie scheiden
hie von iren wiben
und sie aus den hafen triben." [5]

Eberhard Windecke, in his first article on Huss, expressed his belief that the clergy were unrighteous, full of conceit, unchaste, and had too many benefices and properties for their

[1] Théremin, 45.

[2] Ibid., 46.

[3] Ibid., 47.

[4] Ibid., 48.

[5] Ibid. ; Liliencron, i, n. 40, v. 86, 112.

own good. He said that one heard little to the credit of the clergy but much evil about them in the way of pride, selfishness, obstinacy and wantonness. "Well may God pity them." [1] "Such was the reputation of the priesthood in Christendom, that whenever one heard an idle tale and asked to whom did it apply or who did it, the answer was: the bishop, the pobst, the lordly dean or the priest. And the laity were so incensed at the clergy that it would have been no wonder, had God not prevented it, that the Hussites and heretics should have grown much stronger and more numerous." Under these circumstances it was but natural that the clergy should be made the butt of much flippant wit and sarcasm. Of a cloister impoverished by the abbot, it was said for instance :—

"Bei seiner gewalt
was neue worden
die regel ores alden orden
sie mussten drei jar leiden gezwang
aus hungers not an iren dank
des was ein itzlich monch
seins gebets unfrolich." [2]

The chronicles reveal the very interesting fact that in the midst of all these attacks on the clergy, the people accepted the historical Papacy as a necessity, and even the Schism did not shake this belief. Not the Papal office but the wicked Popes who held it were assailed, and the clergy were denounced more vehemently than the Popes. It was significant that the Council of Constance chose a Pope before it took up the reformation of the Church. The supreme head of the Church was spoken of as the "Protector of Christendom", who built churches, cloisters, and chapels; created the monkish orders; and established jubilees as did Clement VI and Boniface IX. Clement VI was spoken of as "clemens" because he wished all to be saved and Urban V was praised for his return to Rome. One Pontiff was called "unlearned in the arts and yet the wisest in worldly affairs and war" and John XXIII was characterized as the "richest and most militant Pope, very sly in directing his affairs", and the conqueror of the Papal States who could boast, "I am a soldier of Christ." Boniface IX ruled "not as Pope, but as a stern Emperor" and was more powerful than any Pope had been for centuries. Under him the best men in the Church were suppressed or subjected to his will.[1] Many persons were chagrined at the election of John XXIII because he had ruled as a tyrant in his diocese and led a worldly life, which was laid bare at the Council of Constance. Few of the Popes could be called a "Light of the World", or "The Way of Truth" or the "Embodiment of Righteousness". Nor did they maintain a "righteous court", or keep the cardinals in order, or check their "pride and greed". Most of the Popes were criticized because they "were too generous with their relatives and friends, and loved them more than the general good of the Church", and because they gave the property of the Church to kings and favourites, many of whom, when not too old or too wise, were made cardinals. The dominating idea in the Papacy was not service, but power. Nepotism was so expensive that the curia was driven to all sorts of simoniacal practices to obtain money. Simony was not concealed but openly used in the Papal court. Clement VI was "greedy for wealth" and his court was "spotted" with simony.[2] Gregory IX courted the rich and noble more than he did the poor, gave places only to those who could pay, and never considered the character and fitness of the recipient. He ran the Church as a big business institution. Of Boniface IX the chronicler "wondered that so many fathers would choose such a youngster as Pope". He was skilled in secular matters, powerful and splendour-loving. Under him the best offices went to the best payers; the worthy poor got nothing. Anything could be secured for gold and nothing without it. He gave so lavishly that no one honoured his gifts. As a result of his policy the Church was overrun with incompetent clergy. Innocent VII, a wise old man with a good reputation, attempted to restore the old conditions, recalled the favours so liberally bestowed, and denounced simony, but he was also greedy for wealth like Boniface IX. The simony of the Popes afforded for the laity a good theme for jest and popular song:—

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[1] Théremin, 49.

[2] Ibid., Liliencron, i, n. 30, v. 336.

"Das pfaffenheit nit had gotes huld
das macht simoni ir schuld
und woltens simoni ablan
so liess got ainikeit ufgan."[3]

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[1] Théremin, 51.
[2] Ibid., 54.
[3] Ibid.; Liliencron, v. 983.

> “ Die päbste pflagenfast der simoni
> wider got und wider recht
> wer pfrund und gotes gab begert
> pracht er gelt, so was er gewert.
> wer mit lerer taschen cham
> der macht sein nuz nicht ashaffen
> es waren laien oder pfaffen.” [1]

The greatest displeasure was expressed with the financial policy of the Papacy to embrace every opportunity to raise funds through gifts, tithes, and collections. Innocent VI was denounced for subsidizing English soldiers and Gregory XI for using large sums to carry on war against Milan. Since the lower clergy opposed these incessant demands for money, the Popes found it to be a wise policy to contract with some strong man to collect the tithes and made him promises which they did not keep. For instance, Adolph of Mainz was promised the bishopric for his assistance, but failed to get it. This system inflicted so many evils on Germany that the chronicler cried out : “ May God see this condition and pass judgment on the author of so great an evil.” In case a Papal legate was sent to collect the money, the citizens and clergy united, as they did in Mainz, to circumvent his efforts, since the “ intriguer ” was only scheming to raise funds “ for the Pope or who knows whom ”. Naturally the burghers called all such methods of securing money, even if for pious purposes, a burden to the churches and benefices.[2] At the outbreak of the Schism Urban VI found it necessary to tax his secretaries, notaries, auditors and all court officials, which indicated the decline of Papal power and the impoverishment of the cardinals who had to go to the Papal palace on foot instead of riding on big stallions or “ maultiere ”. The Papal court, in consequence, became “ weakly and sick ”. At the outset of his reign Urban VI would not tolerate simony, but later on grim necessity forced him to become remarkably fickle in his acts. Papal insistence on collecting the *spolia* aroused a loud local outcry. If a bishop left a large property which he had assembled for the benefit and use of the Church, as William of Cologne did, “ the gullet of the insatiable, greedy curia, which at all times thirsted for money, must have a taste of it.” The Pope immediately sent a legate to demand all the bishop left—jewels, costly articles, as well as wine, corn, household articles, and everything saleable—and thereby " robbed the Church to its injury and to the disgrace of humanity ". The resourceful Popes were always very cleverly devising new means of filling their coffers. Thus Innocent, on the plea that he wished to fight the so-called " English " wares, enacted oppressive rules against foreigners and merchants at Avignon. He likewise laid new duties on bread and wine and decreased the measures.[1] Boniface IX invested his money in trade and demanded big returns. He also accepted usury forbidden by canon law. Begging friars, who wished to be freed from the necessity of begging, paid 100 florins for a dispensation. Indulgences were sold to pilgrims to Rome and to others and, although the people grumbled, they bought the papers and thus much money was secured.[2]

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[1] Liliencron, I, n. 51, v. 30.

[2] Théremin, 57.

The demands made by the clergy for the tithes, or tenths, were felt to be more burdensome by the peasants than the lords and burghers. The tithes were divided into two classes : the large and the small tithes, and they were paid in kind, not in money, before the fifteenth century, after which money payment could be substituted.[3] Complaints about the oppressive character of the tithes began in the thirteenth century and became more pronounced until the Reformation.[4] An estate at Bacharach consisting of 19½ morgen of land paid in 1119, 39,312 silver groschen in tithes ; Neehof near Speier paid 22,464 silver groschen in 1251 ; and Osburg paid 17,785 silver groschen in 1323.[5] The heretic Tanchelm in the bishopric of Utrecht forbade tithing because he claimed that the payment of tithes was voluntary and not compulsory.[6]

This somewhat kaleidoscopic picture, drawn from the writings of the age, throws into strong relief the status of the clergy high and low in Germany during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The influence of the ecclesiastical officials on the social and economic institutions of the country was far greater than any one would imagine. The higher clergy, vieing with the powerful nobles, from which class they were mostly recruited, set the social standards for the nations to a considerable degree and exercised a powerful influence on the economic life. The lower clergy, coming into intimate contact with the masses of the people, touched their life at a thousand points and thus affected the social and industrial institutions of Germany to a far greater degree than is commonly believed. On the other hand the social and economic conditions of the cities, villages, and rural districts reacted upon the clergy and the Church, challenged their power and prerogatives, decreased their influence, and led to revolutionary demands for reforms.

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[1] Théremin, 58.

[2] Ibid., 59.

[3] Lamprecht, i, 609, 614, 615.

[4] Ibid., 613, 624.

[5] Ibid., 617, ii, 585.

[6] Ibid., 620, note 1.

It would be far from the truth, it must be remembered, to characterize all the clergy as ignorant, or immoral, or avaricious. On the contrary, piety and the love of learning pervaded the ranks both of the secular and the monastic clergy. The most active supporters of the art of printing were found among them. Wimpfeling, who so bitterly denounced the lazy monks and the worldly clergy, said: "I can point, God knows, in the six bishoprics of the Rhine, to many, yea to countless, true priests among the worldly ones—many richly equipped with knowledge and blameless in life and morals. In the cathedrals as well as in the parish churches, I know numbers of distinguished prelates, canons and vicars—numbers, I say, not a few only—who are men of spotless reputation and full of piety, generosity, and humility towards the poor." He declared that the number of learned priests "to whom the care of souls is entrusted with great profit" was rapidly increasing in his day.[1] In the ranks of the clergy, as well as in other classes of society, there was the sharpest contrast between the "pious love and worldly greed, godly renunciation and godless self-seeking". But the indisputable fact stands forth that among the ministers of God there were too many who altogether neglected the care of souls in their avarice for clerical rents and incomes, taxes and perquisites.[2]

Closely associated with the immorality and unchastity of the clergy in this age were the numerous complaints about the public women and houses of ill-fame. In Germany these "Frauenhausen" were found in every city, while itinerant courtesans were very numerous.[3] Their chief patrons were the clergy, soldiers, and nobles. The Emperor Charles IV in 1378 destroyed a house of bad repute called "Venice" in Prague.[4]

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[1] Janssen, *Hist. of the Ger. People*, ii, 294.

[2] Ibid., 295.

[3] Schultz, *Deutsches Leben im XIV und XV Jahrh.*, 71.

[4] Ibid., 72.

At the Frankfurt Diet in 1394 there were more than 800 " joy girls ".[1] During the Council of Constance the city was full of wanton women and their presence was officially sanctioned by the council and the city government.[2] It was estimated that there were 1,500 of them in the city from 1415 to 1518. One officer visited all the public houses in Constance and found as many as thirty girls in some and 700 altogether. And of course there were hundreds of prostitutes outside of the regular houses.[3] The greatest honour a city could bestow upon a distinguished visitor like an emperor or a prince was free entrance to the " Frauenhausen ". When the Emperor Sigismund went to Ulm in 1434 the streets were lighted up so that he and his followers could go safely to the homes of the public prostitutes.[4] When Sigismund with 800 followers went to Bern in 1414 the mayor ordered all " frauenhausen " to receive them kindly and without payment of money, and to charge the bill to him. Sigismund boasted loudly of this model hospitality. The same thing occurred in Vienna in 1425.[5] The Jews were excluded from these houses. In like manner the Emperor Frederick III in 1471 was received in Nuremberg.[6] An ambassador of Frederick III experienced similar treatment in Naples.[7] The numerous fairs and festivals furnished an excellent opportunity for these women to ply their business. For example, " many bad women " were reported to be in attendance at the Johannisfeste in Breisach in 1475.[8] Military camps supplied another good field for their operations. Thus Charles the Bold (1433–1477) in his army before Neuss found 900 priests and 1,600 courtesans and in 1476 he reported that 2,000 " saleable women " accompanied his army.[9]

Special care was taken to regulate the public houses and to protect the cities in which they were located. Pains were taken to keep them away from the churches, and usually certain districts were set aside for them—thus, for instance, in Frankfurt that section of the city was called " Rosenthal ". Police supervision was not particularly strict, but on the contrary very lax, even though many cities had special officers to look after them. In Regensburg, Constance, Würzburg, and elsewhere houses were rented for a definite period for assignation purposes. In Frankfurt in 1347 a physician made weekly visits to the houses of prostitution, and the same thing was done in Ulm in the fifteenth century. Vienna had a "Frauenrichter" and Esslingen a "Frauenwirt" who managed this business. Many city ordinances were enacted to regulate the traffic. Thus Zurich in 1313 forced public women to wear a distinct uniform. The charges to patrons and the division of the revenues, by which the girls as a rule received one-third, were regulated by law. Nuremberg forbade houses to let priests visit them. Pope Pius V ordered that these public characters be refused Christian burial.[1]

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[1] Kriegk, *Deutsches Bürgerthum*, ii, 261.

[2] Joh. Nideri de Visionibus, lib. v, cap. 10, Helmst., 1692.

[3] Ibid., ii, 262.

[4] Schultz, 76–7; Kriegk, ii, 263.

[5] Kreigk, ii, 262–3.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Kreigk, ii, 264.

[8] Johannes Knebel, *Tagebuch* 1473–9, 269.

[9] Schultz, 72.

With the Reformation and Counter-Reformation a pronounced reaction set in. In the sixteenth century many of the houses of prostitution were closed and the inmates driven out. Severe punishments were inflicted on the women and sometimes on the men. Stations of mercy for the rescue of these fallen women began to appear. The evil was not suppressed, of course, but there was a general improvement of the moral tone of Europe in connection with this social evil.[2]

These women with permanent homes were commonly protected by the city governments. Indeed some of the houses were organized as sisterhoods, whose president was appointed by the city fathers and whose members were given legal protection.[3] In Nuremberg the law provided that the girls should receive 1 pfennig a visit or 3 pfennigs a night, and the houses were ordered closed promptly at twelve o'clock except for the guests of the night. The inmates of these houses were frequently required to wear a prescribed uniform and regular taxes were paid to the city for the right to conduct the business.[4]

The immorality of the clergy during this period was a matter of common knowledge and little attempt was made by the clergy to keep their unchastity secret. "Priest-girl" was a common term during the late Middle Ages and entire cloisters kept these women within their walls. In 1455 and again in 1466 Regensburg denounced the sinful and scandalous practices of the monks. The city council of Friedberg in Baden in 1485 had to order the Augustinians and the barefooted friars to "deport themselves more chastely ".[1] Count Ulrich von Würtemberg wrote to his son in 1477 that in a cloister at Kercheim the night dances and orgies were worse than a public house of ill-fame.[2] A Basel decree of 1498 gave this warning: "Whoever day or night enters a male or female cloister therein to do sinful work shall be fined 10 gulden." Many monks kept their mistresses openly and even bought them homes in which they supported them.[3] The priests had their concubines, and threatened punishments for such irregularities had little effect. The city of Regensburg denounced the immoral nuns of St Clara and tried to reform them. The cloisters of Carisinnen and Renerinnen, founded to protect fallen girls, became themselves in time houses of ill repute. The council of Nördlingen in 1472 forbade priests staying all night in the nunneries.[4]

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[1] Kriegk, ii, 300–16.

[2] Ibid., 329–36.

[3] Ibid., 73.

[4] Ibid., 74–5.

The bishops everywhere had their concubines, and yet at the same time their decrees and the acts of the synods over which they presided were full of complaints about the "priest-girls ". One bishop sought to reduce the evil by putting a tax on the 11,000 concubines of priests in his diocese. In Switzerland nearly every priest kept a mistress. Although many laws were enacted to improve the morals of the priests and their addiction to drunkenness and gambling, still it is apparent that incontinency was not regarded as a sin but only a human weakness. Basel in 1487 sought to curb the evil by taking all such cases out of the spiritual courts and turning them over to the secular courts.[5] A representative of the Frankfurt Diet in 1446 actually included in his bill of expenses a visit to a public house of ill-fame.[6] The laws of the day recognized four classes of illegitimate children: (1) those born in concubinage; (2) those born by an accidental union; (3) those born of a priest; and (4) those born of a public woman. Those of the first class were the most honourable, and those of the fourth class the worst. In the German states no law punished concubinage; on the contrary it was tolerated and not labelled a sin.[7] These illegitimates up to 1500 took the name of the father and were supported by him. It is significant of a general moral awakening, however, that in the fourteenth century and later bastards were not admitted to memberships in the guilds.[1] As a rule punishment for a breach of the marriage vow was very light, and wives were even frequently sold for immoral purposes. A rare exception is found in Austria where in 1340 two such culprits were pierced with a pike.[2] From the sixteenth century on, bigamy was punished and in 1506 a man was drowned in Frankfurt for that crime.

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[1] Kreigk, ii, 268.

[2] Ibid., ii, 268.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., ii, 269.

[5] Ibid., 270.

[6] Ibid., 274.

[7] Ibid., 279.

The general opinion prevailed in the Middle Ages that well-regulated houses of prostitution were a public necessity to protect the purity of wives and daughters and to prevent immorality, hence all the German towns had them not as private but as public institutions. They were licensed and legalized and often rented out to some responsible citizen. These houses sometimes took religious names such as " The Home of the Great Abbey ", " The Abbesses," and " The House of the Cloak of God ". The council of Nuremberg prefaced its ordinance of 1470 regulating these houses with these words : "To nourish honour and good morals, to prevent sins and punishable deeds, one must tolerate in Christendom the common woman." [3] In 1480 the same council " for the prevention of greater evils " set aside a certain portion of the city for such establishments. The Nördlingen ordinance of 1472 ran : " Although the Mother of Holy Christendom, in order to prevent the appearance of greater evils, permits the establishment of a house of prostitution with free daughters in a community," etc.[4] Even during the Reformation, Basel opposed the abolition of these houses on the ground that they protected wives and daughters of respectable citizens. As late as 1562 the government of Nuremberg appointed a committee consisting of three clergy and six judges to decide what should be done with such houses. Two of the judges opposed their abolition because " nothing under heaven could prevent the practice and because their destruction would gravely endanger honourable daughters". The clergy contended that the evil should not be tolerated and the houses were abolished.[5] Bishops and even the Popes championed these houses. In Rome the annual income in the sixteenth century from licensed houses amounted to 20,000 ducats. Until 1450 the Archbishop of Mainz received a yearly income from the prostitutes of his province. In Frankfurt until 1561 the city council contributed to the endowment of religious foundations connected with the Carmelites and Dominicans from taxes levied on public houses. Some of these establishments were regarded as fiefs of princes, bishops, and even the Emperor. The Bishop of Würzburg and the Duke of Austria each owned such a house in 1435, and in 1577 the German emperor gave Michael Kuhle such a house in Ober Ebenheim. The Catholic dean of Würtzburg owned a similar place in the dorf Martinsheim in 1577.[1] These houses were of two kinds: those strictly private and those that were public.[2] Although individual prelates benefited from this traffic, yet the Church as a general thing condemned the men and women who conducted the business as sinners and dishonourable persons.[3] In Würtzburg "Flower Street" was given up to the prostitutes and on Johannis Day the city officials were accustomed to hold a great celebration in some house of ill-fame.[4] At the famous Diet of Worms in 1521, made memorable by the trial of Luther, "all laps were full of pretty maidens," and the Emperor and princes in broad daylight visited the houses of prostitution in this "city of Venus".[5]

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[1] Kriegk, 287.

[2] Ibid., 289.

[3] Ibid., 292.

[4] Ibid, 293.

[5] Ibid.

Geiler von Kaiserberg preached a sermon from the chancel of the Strassburg cathedral in which he said: "I scarcely know which course would be the better—to put a daughter in a cloister, or in a house of ill-fame. Why? In a cloister she is a prostitute, yet a woman of honour! But if she goes into a public house, she is struck to the ground and must eat and drink bad things." [6] Nicholas of Cusa said the same thing a century earlier.[7] Thomas Murner, a Franciscan, expressed the same sentiment.[8] A chronicle declared that the convent at Oberndorf in Thal, with twenty-four nuns all of noble birth, was little more than a house of prostitution for the nobles of the Necker valley.[9] King Matthias called the priests of Breslau cowardly, greedy, evil, immoral and rotten. A synod held in that city said that the "priest played with the son of Venus at night and in the daytime erected the son of the Virgin on the altar". Concubinage was rampant and threatened to injure the income of the Church, because the property went to the children of these illegitimate alliances. The Breslauers complained that their wives and daughters would be much safer if the priests had regular wives of their own. Many instances were recorded where the priests "paid damages" for their unchastity. Syphilis, known as the "French disease", was so common that in 1501 the city government ordered the bishop to have prayers offered up to relieve the community.[1] The priests of St Nicholas and St Maurice in Breslau owned two beer gardens and drew a revenue from them.[2] The begging monks were universally hated as was shown in the laws of the period.[3] After begging on the streets they were frequently caught in the houses of prostitution spending the money given to them for pious purposes. The abbots lived a gay life, entertained by giving parties, owned fast horses and hunting dogs, and indulged in dancing. Of one abbot it was said that he would not have enjoyed life "without dogs and women"; another was praised "as a second Solomon, because he loaned his wives"; another died of syphilis; and still another died of drunkenness.[4] Open brawls were continually occurring between the monks and the nuns and everywhere their relationships were deplorable.

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[1] Kriegk, 294–5.

[2] Ibid., 296.

[3] Ibid., 292.

[4] Ibid., 264.

[5] Ibid., 262.

[6] Schultz, i, 2, 6.

[7] Grösse, *Literaturgeschichte*, II, i, 31.

[8] *Narrenbeschwörung*, xxxix, 49.

[9] Meyer, *Studien zur Vorgeschichte der Reformation. Aus schlesischen Quellen.* München u. Berlin, 1903. *Zimmerischen Chronik*, iii, 69.

The higher clergy lived in luxury, while the lot of the lower clergy was one of poverty. The number of the clergy was increasing, while the income from the benefices was decreasing. The parishes often had from two to eight hufen of land. It was worthy of comment when one priest had four cows, four pigs, and twenty-four sheep.[5] In Silesia a small benefice returned but 10 ducats, a middle-sized one from 18 to 20, and few above 30. The practice of pluralism entailed the most disastrous economic results. In the fifteenth century it was almost impossible to collect the tithes and the standing complaint of the clergy was "The tithes are unpaid". In 1479 a chaplain in Lauban wrote Duke Frederick I of Leignitz:

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[1] Meyer.
[2] Ibid., 24.
[3] Ibid., 25–6.
[4] Ibid., 28.
[5] Lamprecht, 540, 656.

"I am but a poor and miserable priest, who has almost nothing."[1] The coinage system was in a sadly demoralized condition, lacking in uniformity and values, and every subterfuge was employed to avoid payments to the clergy. The practice developed among the clergy of reserving a "pension" from their benefices and then surrendering them. In some cases benefices with an income of only 10 to 30 ducats were mortgaged for a "pension" of from 20 to 40 ducats. All efforts to break up this detestable "pension" system failed. The clergy also made wills by which they cut off the income of the Church.[2] The number of "altar priests", who were independent of the bishop and refused to obey the regular parish priests, increased to such an extent that in Breslau alone there were 400 of them, or one per cent of the whole population. Their chief business was to care for the souls of the dead and thus they were able to gobble up many benefices and special bequests. Exorbitant fees were demanded for burials and other services. In one parish church in Breslau 10,000 regular masses were offered in one year and in that city of 30,000 inhabitants there were 1,000 clergy in 1500, who were sadly demoralized by the general low social condition and economic poverty and incessant warfare. "War and the pest," it was recorded in 1500, "have almost destroyed the human race here—there are no labourers, no servants, and no value to property." At the outbreak of the Reformation the numerous cloisters in Silesia had either been robbed in warfare, or sold, or deserted for lack of an income.[3]

From the time Boniface VIII gave the monks the privilege of reading the mass and hearing confessions, a pronounced and very hostile breach sprang up between them and the ordinary clergy. "Vain hate and jealousy between the priests and the monks," Luther called it.[4] The conflict developed into a contest for rule and for bread, and the ecclesiastical authorities were kept busy defining the limits of the rights of the two classes. Consequently all discipline and order in the Church were affected and a wholesome rivalry for the care of souls was well-nigh forgotten. The laity were disposed to take the side of the monks and hence the monks became the champions of the secular classes and orders against the clergy. In Breslau, and no doubt elsewhere, whenever the city was under the ban, the monks said mass and performed the other necessary religious ceremonies. The hatred of the people for the priests was often aroused by the monks. The Popes found the monks to be very handy tools to sell indulgences and to collect funds, hence they were not averse to granting them complete independence of episcopal jurisdiction. The monks as a class had little sympathy with the endeavours for reform and the begging orders in particular were bitter foes of such spiritual orders as the Little Brothers. This mania for independence soon spread to certain groups of the clergy. The altar priests formed a separate brotherhood and opposed the secular clergy, and all over Germany a conflict arose between the bishops and the monarchically organized chapters. In Breslau the bishop after a hard fight was triumphant. The general result of these controversies was the decline and often the complete destruction of all discipline. The power and pride of the Roman Church of an earlier period—and of to-day—were rapidly declining at the close of the Middle Ages. Both the art of command and of obedience had been lost and a wide gap separated the worldly from the priestly power.[1]

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[1] Meyer, *Studien zur Vorgeschichte der Reformation*, 30.
[2] Ibid., 31–2. [3] Ibid., 33–7. [4] Ibid., 86–105.

Notwithstanding the individual cases of poverty among the cloisters and the priests, the Church as a whole in Germany was very wealthy, perhaps the richest in all Christendom.[2] Excepting the great bankers and merchant princes, the cloisters were the most conspicuous centres of wealth. The clergy as a class, and not the merchants, or the princes, or the nobles controlled the money of Germany and set standards of value. It must be remembered that for many centuries the clergy had received money, property, bequests, tithes, and gifts, which had gradually accumulated until all told they constituted an asset of vast value. Consequently while the princes and nobles had to deny themselves, and not infrequently were in dire need of means of support, the canons of the cathedrals and the monks and nuns in the endowed cloisters were supplied to overflowing. The number of these spiritual potentates was by no means small. Agricola said that there were more cloisters, foundations, and endowed churches than castles of the lords.[1] At Cologne alone there were reported to be 5,000 priests and monks and enough churches and chapels to accommodate them. In all Germany the number of monks and nuns was given at 1,500,000 [2] and the regular clergy must have totalled an astonishingly large force. In many towns the Church buildings and institutions covered the greater part of the town, yet the Church was never satisfied with its possessions but was always seeking to enlarge them. Within the sacerdotal body, however, there were the sharpest contrasts in respect to income. The lower orders of parochial clergy, whose nominal stipends were derived from many precarious tithes, were often compelled by poverty or tempted by avarice, to engage in some trade not consistent with their calling, and which in consequence exposed them to the contempt of their parishioners. The higher ecclesiastical orders, on the other hand, enjoyed superfluous incomes and hence provoked the indignation of the lower clergy and common people, incited the jealousy of the upper classes, and aroused the scorn of all serious minds.[3]

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[1] Meyer, 105.

[2] Janssen, *Hist. of the Ger. People*, ii, 295. The Church owned a third of the land.

The social activities of the Church were expressed largely through the endowed establishments such as hospitals, orphanages, hostels for needy pilgrims, benevolent endowments, schools, and asylums, which grew out of and were gradually differentiated from the monasteries.[4] Hospitals were probably founded in all of the large cities of Europe by the end of the thirteenth century and flourished from that time on. Endowments were gradually built up through gifts and bequests until these establishments were on an enduring basis. A regular force of keepers and attendants were in residence to minister to the comfort and needs of the sick, the injured, the aged, and the poor. Each institution also had its chapel with a priest to care for the souls of the inmates. While physicians were not so plentiful in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, still they were found in all the chief centres of population and in the courts of the rulers and wealthy nobles, and not infrequently were used for delicate diplomatic purposes.

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[1] J. Agricola, *Sprichwörter*, No. 1.
[2] Ibid., No. 734; Schultz, ii, 636.
[3] Janssen, ii, 295.
[4] Luther wrote: "Our fathers and forefathers, kings, princes, nobles, and others, gave generously, lovingly, and overflowingly, to churches, parishes institutions, and hospitals."

From 1280 to 1500 there were many doctors in Frankfurt.[1] Great pestilences of cholera, plague, and smallpox devastated Europe. Healers and quacks without a scientific education were tolerated and widely patronized by the ignorant masses, who were eager to obtain charms and relics and gave great heed to signs and omens. Apothecary shops were located in all the large cities and did a lucrative business in drugs and medicines. Asylums gradually came into use to provide for orphans, the aged, the destitute, the insane, and the blind, deaf, and dumb.[2] By controlling the wills of the people the clergy were able to persuade those with property to bequeath it to the Church for these various pious purposes, or for their own personal use. The voluntary offerings for good works were so constant and abundant that there was little need for governmental donations, or for the levying of poor-rates or school taxes.[3] Many of the institutions of the fifteenth century are still rendering valuable service in Europe to-day. One of the great aims of the Church was to lessen poverty and misery, to protect the working classes, and to secure an equitable distribution of material wealth and property. In theory the Church taught the union of all in brotherly love, not the profit and gain of individuals, as the basis of true political economy. Writers on canon law opposed usurers and monopolists, and urged the clergy to preach "the cause of the poor, the widows and the orphans." [4]

152. *The Burghers*

The burghers, or middle class in the towns and cities, began to emerge after the twelfth century and from that time on played an increasingly greater part in the civilization of Western Europe. Prior to that time society was divided into two classes: the priests and the nobles; after that, they began to be arranged into three categories: the prayers, the fighters, and the workers. The workers in the towns gradually freed themselves and consequently claimed in their turn a share in political, economic, and social privileges. This emancipation of a powerful middle class of freemen was a fact of great importance and significance, because it materially modified the history of Western civilization for centuries to come. A remarkable picture of the rise of the burgher to a position of power and wealth was drawn by John Boemus :—

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[1] Kriegk, i, 5, 7, 8, 18, 26, 34, 83.

[2] Ibid., 100, 161.

[3] Lamprecht, i, 656.

[4] Janssen, *Hist. of the German People*, ii, 292–3.

" The third class is the people in the cities, of whom some are subjects to the Emperor, others to princes, or the Church. Those under the Emperor have much liberty. . . In all imperial cities there are two kinds of citizens—the nobles and the common people. The ordinary burgher engages in business and manufacturing—the noble burghers, who are called patricians, live on their means, their incomes, and aspire to the knight's rank. If one of the small burghers becomes rich, and hence dealings and association with him sought after, he would be thrust back. So for a long time each remained in his own class." But affairs and circumstances brought the two classes together more and more—they ate, drank and traded with each other—and seldom quarrelled. Each class had its own distinct dress clothes and working garments. The men wore woollen and the women linen clothing. The workers ate four times daily, while those who did not work only twice. The burghers were ambitious to become nobles and were often able to purchase titles of nobility from the Emperor, but they were despised by the old nobility. Furthermore by marriage, office, and purchase the peasants were continually passing into the ranks of the higher social classes.[1] Another contemporary declared that all burghers—tradesmen, tailors, bakers, shoemakers, and candlestick-makers—all wanted to be nobles.[2]

In this manner the social hierarchy had come to be fundamentally modified by economic conditions. The power of gold had to be recognized in the new civilization that was replacing medievalism. In France there was a craze for the accumulation of wealth and many burghers were very well to do, although the rich were scarcer than to-day. Quite a few persons became wealthy through the working of mines, especially at Lyons and Dauphiné. By the end of the Middle Ages the bourgeoisie had come to be a financial power and consequently a political power as well. The rich burghers were taken into the royal court as advisers, sometimes even dominated the policy of the monarch, and thus played an important rôle in French history. They began to get their hands on the lucrative offices in the Church and State. Many of the guilds became rich and influential in the affairs of the day. A plutocracy of merchants grew up, eager, and often able by purchase, favouritism or appointment, to obtain titles of nobility. The old nobles were impoverished through the incessant and expensive warfare, the luxury of the times, the decline in old values, and the lack of natural ability for business, and had to make terms with the ambitious burghers, from whom they borrowed money on mortgages, with whom they made marriage alliances, and to whom they surrendered a share in the political and military life of the day. With the establishment of French banks the business of lending money passed out of the hands of the Jews and Italians and into the hands of the keen burghers. Letters of credit were issued, rents were collected, loans were made on mortgages and interest rates as high as 20 per cent were charged.[1]

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[1] Schultz, ii, 527.

[2] Geiler, *Narrenbeschwörung*, xxvii, 22 ; Agricola, *Sprichtwörter*, No. 259.

In the rise of feudalism the towns and even the cities had all come under the feudal sway of some one or more lords—a bishop, an abbot, a count, or a king. Hence the conditions of these townspeople was no better than that of the peasants in the country. They were no more masters of their property, persons, time and ability than the serfs of the field. The process of emancipation of the townfolks from feudal domination was gradual and without any order or uniformity. The causes were many and varied greatly in different countries and even in the various sections of the same country.

According to the social theory of the feudal system the common people were expected to do all the work and support the privileged classes. Gradually those who lived in the towns by handicrafts and trading became more wealthy than the peasants who tilled the soil, formed guilds, and thus by organized efforts at length secured their freedom and rights. This transition of the townspeople from a condition of serfdom to independent self-government was an epoch-making change, which was destined to be an important factor in the decline of the Medieval Church. The cities of Greece and Rome, like those of our own day, dominated business, culture, and life, but with the break-up of the Roman Empire their importance rapidly declined. Under the feudal regime towns began to appear on the feudal manors after the eleventh century and were usually located near the lord's castle, or about a monastery, or at fords in the rivers, or on advantageous harbours of the sea, or at convenient points along routes of trades. This revival of town and city marked a new era in the life of Europe, and particularly when they began to secure their independence. Many of these towns, vassals of lords, bishops or kings, virtually became feudal lords or suzerains themselves with vassals of their own.

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[1] Lavisse, IV, ii, 153–63.

The Italian towns flourished within their walls under the leadership of their bishops and lords, and extended their control over the neighbouring districts. With the increase of industry and commerce the prosperous citizens and the poorer classes as well aspired to some share in the government. The rise of the communes marks the rise of modern society and the state in their conflict with feudalism which was aristocratic in spirit and built upon agricultural interests. Cremona expelled Bishop Landulf (1003–1031), destroyed his castle and refused to pay him feudal dues. Lucca was incited against its bishop by Henry IV, who promised it political freedom. To obtain allies Pope and Emperor granted privileges to cities in rich profusion. The bishops were helpless in combating the rise of municipal governments in the cities, first in Lombardy, and then elsewhere. Everywhere the town threw off the ecclesiastical and feudal rule and the government came finally to be located in the hands of municipal officers elected by the wealthier class of citizens. The humble artisans were excluded altogether from a voice in town affairs, hence frequently broke out in revolt. The nobles took up their residence in the towns, divided into rival factions, and produced a turmoil unknown to-day. By 1300 the free municipalities had perished almost everywhere before the onslaughts of the tyrannical nobles, except in Florence, Venice, and Genoa. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Italy was distracted by almost incessant civil wars and after 1494 became a prey to the rival greed of France, Spain, and Germany.[1]

The French towns, more especially in the south, followed the example of municipal freedom set by Italy. Arles in 1131, Montpellier, 1141, Nîmes, 1145, Narbonne, 1148, and Toulouse, 1188, all chose their own rulers from the higher class of the bourgeois or even the nobles, and enjoyed a considerable measure of independence. The towns of Northern France were not far behind the south in demanding their rights and liberties. Charters were secured in various ways: (1) by purchase at some fixed price; (2) by an agreement of the bourgeois to serve the lord in war; and (3) by insurrection and force. It was only natural that the lords should oppose the decrease of their power and income, and the clergy were generally hostile to the movement as "new and detestable" and "contrary to the canon law and to the decisions of the Holy Fathers". There was little uniformity in the charters and the terms varied in each one. As a rule the cities strove to secure the status of subjects immediately responsible to the king. The kings, in turn, were equally anxious for such reinforcements of rich and powerful allies to weaken the feudal lords and to enrich the royal domain.[1] As a result of the royal policy of concentration of power and territory communes were not established in central France. Orleans and Paris never became communes. The towns of this section were called "villes de bourgeoisie" with charters which protected them from arbitrary taxation and granted them certain commercial and other privileges, but did not give them self-government. These charters were more uniform and the model given by Louis VII to Lorris was copied in over eighty *villes* in central France. The charter of Beaumont-en-Argonne was used in 300 *villes* in north-eastern France, and permitted the people to elect a mayor and a board of commissioners. Legally the communes became feudal individuals, while the *villes* remained subject to feudal dues. The communes had gained their freedom but did not know how to preserve it. Their history is the counterpart of the Italian communes—a continuous record of social troubles, political strife between the rich and the poor, and the intervention of a lord or the king. The royal government gradually extended its power over the commune as well as the *ville* until by 1400 the communes had lost their liberties and disappeared in dependence on the crown.[2]

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[1] Thatcher and Schwill, *Europe in the Middle Ages*, ch. xvii.

The German cities were of two classes: those that were rebuilt on the ruins of the old Roman cities in the Rhine and Danube valleys, and those that were newly founded at a later date in the interior.[1] The most important among the former were the episcopal cities. In the tenth century the emperors began to hand over to the bishops full jurisdiction over their cities with the right to appoint the officers, but still regarded them as imperial fortresses or burgs, governed by special laws. The next step of importance was the establishment of self-government in the towns with one or more burgomasters at its head and a *rat* or council. Meanwhile there grew up numerous imperial cities on the imperial lands or on the estates of the emperors. During the Hohenstaufen reign the imperial cities never gained any political liberties, although they did secure many restrictions on the arbitrary taxation of the lords. But under the Interregnum and thereafter they emancipated themselves entirely and obtained complete independence politically. Some of the cities owed their freedom to privileges granted them by the emperor for deeds of valour in fighting the Turks. Others purchased their liberty from a temporal lord or a bishop for a definite sum of money.[2] In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the cities of Germany were of two classes: those that held directly from the Emperor and were called free imperial cities, which in 1507 numbered about 100,[3] and those that held from an intermediate bishop or lord. It was not uncommon for the cities to form leagues, including as many as 100 towns, to protect their rights and interests by war against the princes and nobles. To the Swabian League belonged twenty-eight towns, and to the Hanseatic League sixty-two.[4] Many of the cities gained large tracts of land outside of their walls and some of the "free cities" like Hamburg, Bremen, Lübeck and Nuremberg took rank among the states of Germany. The wealthy merchants and business men were no longer despised by the nobility, and the towns in 1487 began to send delegates to the diets. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the German cities were given up to internal revolutions and counter-revolutions, as well as to external wars. After the fifteenth century many of the cities began to decrease in population and some of them became little more than villages. In 1450 Nuremberg had 20,000 inhabitants; Strassburg 18,000 and Frankfurt 10,000. The government of the free cities was not uniform, although as a rule it consisted of a council to which were admitted citizens, traders who were not citizens, and artisans. The council appointed the magistrates who administered justice, regulated the revenues and managed all public affairs.[1] When the revolt against Rome came on, most of the cities championed the cause of the Reformation and did valuable service in carrying it to a successful issue.[2]

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[1] Thatcher and Schwill, ch. xvi.

[2] Ibid.

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[1] Rietschel, *Die Civitas auf deutschen Boden bis zum Ausgange der Karolingerzeit*, Leipzig, 1894, discusses the old towns, and *Markt und Stadt in ihrem rechtlichen Verhältnis*, Leipzig, 1897, the new.

[2] Report of the Venetian ambassador, Quirini, quoted in Robinson, *Readings*, ii, 35.

[3] Report of Venetian ambassador. Quirini, quoted in Robinson, *Readings*, ii, 32.

[4] Ibid.

The rise of cities in England was much more orderly and of less consequence than on the continent. Most of them received their charters by purchase.[3] There are comparatively few evidences of destructive revolts against tyrannical lords. The War of the Roses resulted most disastrously for the higher nobility, since many of the great families were wiped out entirely while others were decimated and impoverished. Edward IV was well-nigh merciless in confiscating the goods and properties of his enemies. It was a fact of great social and economic significance when the Earl of Warwick was called "the last of the barons". The general result of the War of the Roses was twofold: first it enabled the despotic régime of the Tudors to be established and, secondly, it advanced the wealth and power of the middle class. Commerce and manufacturing flourished and shrewd business men began to establish fortunes. Houses of brick began to appear, and many magnificent churches were erected. The wills of the rich show to what extent private fortunes had accumulated.[4] The new nobility created under Edward IV were busy building splendid manor houses rather than feudal fortress-castles of the old type. Prices were high and wages in industrial establishments were good. In many ways the age was one of general prosperity. The brunt of the war fell heavily upon the baronage and their retainers, but passed lightly, for the most part, over the heads of the middle classes. Since the towns as a rule were spared by the victors on both sides and readily submitted to the king, they suffered little or nothing. Baronial castles were repeatedly besieged and destroyed, but there is no single instance of a town standing a siege. Indeed considerable pains were taken to spare the commons and to conciliate the masses, consequently there was no ruinous devastation of the land and hence prosperity revived quickly after the conflict. The new lords abandoned the old practice of working their demesne by villein labour and let out the land to tenant-farmers at a moderate rent and as a result a large prosperous class of yeomanry appeared. Such labour as could not be advantageously employed on the farms was easily absorbed by the growing industrial needs of the towns.[1]

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[1] Report of the Venetian ambassador, Quirini, quoted in Robinson, *Readings*, ii, 34.

[2] Keutgen, "The Medieval Commune," in *Encyc. Brit.*, vi, 786.

[3] Thatcher and Schwill, 439.

[4] *Encyc. Brit.*, "English History," ix, 520.

Material prosperity did not produce spiritual development in England in the fifteenth century. The Wiclif movement had died down under persecution and lingered in a subterranean fashion among the people, the lower clergy, and a small class in the universities. The moral life and activity of the Church were stagnant. The great prelates were mere politicians with scarcely one conspicuous for his piety or virtue. Some of them were excellent statesmen but few were patrons of learning. Pecock of Chichester, who dared to set "reason" above "authority" as a standard of judging the dogmas of the Medieval Church, was tried for heresy in 1457 and imprisoned in a monastery the remainder of his life.[2] The monks declined in number, lost their religious zeal, and were enshrouded in intellectual torpor. The parochial clergy were in a healthier moral condition, but even their intelligence, piety, and morality were at a low ebb. The abuses of pluralism and non-residence were more rampant than ever. The true picture of the age is revealed in the Paston Letters, the unique private correspondence of a typical family of the *nouveaux riches*—ambitious, greedy, unscrupulous, and immoral. Verily England was awaiting the day of intellectual and spiritual deliverance.

Throughout Europe generally the middle class manifested n many different ways its hostility to the Church and its officials. The universal suspicion and hatred of the priesthood, which began early and became more pronounced as the sixteenth century approached, was a social and economic rather than an irreligious movement. The priests themselves were responsible for this decline of confidence and increase of hostility.[1] A concrete and significant instance of this distrust of the Church is revealed in the administration of charity. The care of the poor and needy was the crowning glory of the Medieval Church and many societies and religious brotherhoods had been organized to carry on this praiseworthy work. But when a new consciousness of responsibility for social welfare was born in the towns, the municipal governments took the hospitals and charitable institutions out of the hands of the Church and put them under civic administration. Cities insisted upon a more definite agreement with the clergy about provisions for the poor and the unfortunate.[2] Popular education, which had been monopolized at an earlier time by the clergy, was likewise taken over by the cities [3]—a truly epoch-making transformation. One of the immediate results of this change was an acute conflict between the city and the Church over taxes.

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[1] *Encyc. Brit.*, ix, 420.

[2] *The Repressor*, ed. Babington, *Rolls Series*, 2 vols., London, 1860.

Up to the fourteenth century the civilization was of the "warrior-priestly-peasant" type, but that gave way to the "city-social" epoch. First the knight supplanted the priest as the transmitter of civilization, and then the rich burgher supplanted the knight. Town life and ideals became the highest model for Europe and many of the germs of our modern city civilization began to appear. Business interests gained a supremacy and powerfully influenced political evolution. Material prosperity became the foundation for the conspicuous development of civilization—spiritual, artistic, literary, and educational. Without the growth of cities in wealth and power modern culture would have been impossible. A survey of the history of the free republics in Italy, the communes in France, and the free towns in Germany furnishes abundant proof of this fact. The wealthy townsmen stood next to the great landed nobles in power in Germany and hence in the second half of the fifteenth century the powerful lords organized to crush the cities. Although their political power was somewhat broken by 1500, still they continued to be, as Machiavelli said, "the kernel of the empire" and the fountain source of German industry and civilization. As the seats of banking, their economic importance continued to increase as time passed. People then as to-day flocked to the cities "to make their fortunes" and in the various German states the cities were the dominant factors and owned lands and villages outside their own walls. Frequently the cities bought out the holdings of nobles and attempted to carry on scientific farming. One of the results of this expansion of the burgher influence was to create a new aristocracy.[1] Nuremberg owned 20 square miles of territory and smaller cities possessed from 2 to 3 square miles. Nuremberg, Hamburg, Bremen, Breslau, Lübeck, and Cologne ruled over villages often with a total aggregate population of 10,000 or 20,000. Ulm, Strassburg, and Nuremberg had a regular tax for the protection of their outside dependents. Augsburg, Frankfurt, Zurich, and Basel had 18,000 outside their walls; Mainz and Dresden 5,000; and Meisen 2,000. Great pride was taken in public improvements and much wholesome rivalry existed. Copying the example of Indian cities, the German cities early began to pave their streets—Lübeck in 1310, Strassburg 1322, Weses 1324, Prague 1331, Nuremberg 1368, Windberg 1379, Frankfurt and Bern 1399, Regensburg 1400, Breslau 1406, Augsburg 1416, Landshat 1494, and thereafter the work progressed rapidly everywhere. Aeneas Sylvius praised the paved streets of Vienna. At the beginning of the sixteenth century all the principal German cities had streets paved with flintstone.[2] The wealthy used sedan chairs in travelling through the streets to avoid the mud and filth. Streets were cleaned and lighted at first only for state occasions, but soon the practice became common. To prevent the numerous disastrous fires fire brigades and pumps were established. Nuremberg seems to have initiated this movement. Great pride was taken in the city hall, the market place, the guild halls, the city walls and gates, and the town well. The Castilian knight Peter Tafur, in 1438 praised " the tiled houses, fine fronts with their glass windows, the many towers with crosses and weather-vanes, and the beautifully paved streets of Basel ". Strassburg was called " the most beautiful city in Christendom ". When in 1410 Ulm ordered the streets cleared of all pigs from 12 to 1 o'clock, the act was so exceptional as to be worthy of special record. The general custom was to allow the pigs the utmost freedom in the streets in order to eat up the refuse and thus keep the highways clean! Nuremberg had a " hog ordinance ". In 1421 Frankfurt ordered all pigpens on the streets to be removed. Breslau in 1495 forbade pigs roaming around free. As late as 1500 Frankfurt had 1,200 pigs fattening in the city.[1]

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[1] Steinhausen, 413.

[2] Ibid., 415.

[3] Ibid.

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[1] Bezold, 10.

[2] Schultz, i, 23.

The fame of the German cities in the fifteenth century spread over Europe. Cologne in 1408 was called " the largest, richest and most beautiful city in all Germany ". The praise of Aeneas Sylvius in 1458 is famous. In 1471 the secretary of an Italian cardinal and legate, Augustus Patritius, declared that the appearance and beauty of the German cities surpassed the Italian. A Frenchman, Pierre de Froissard, expressed astonishment at the wealth of the German merchants and said : " The prosperity of the cities, the charm of the public buildings and private homes, the costly treasures inside the houses, are all loud witnesses of the wealth." Machiavelli, while denouncing German culture of the sixteenth century, pointed to the cities as the corner-stone of European wealth. Montaigne praised German cities as " much prettier and cleaner than French cities ". Dr. Scheure, in lauding his native city declared that what Venice was to Italy, Nuremberg was to Germany. Luther in complimenting the same city spoke of it as " the eye and ear of Germany ".[2]

Some conception of the character of the population may be gained from the following statistics of the city of Nuremberg in the fourteenth century: Burghers 3,753, women 4,383, children 6,173, servants 3,274, or a total of 17,583. To this number should be added 1,547 foreigners who were not citizens, 446 clergy, and 150 Jews, who would bring the total population up to about 20,000.[3] The military strength of this city in 1388 was given at 8,000 men. It was reported that in 1437 13,000 persons died of the plague and 9,000 fled from fear, which caused the city to be almost deserted. Conrad Celtis gave the total population as 52,000 in 1500, the annual birth-rate as 4,000, and the number of fighting men as 10,000.[4] In the city of Basel in 1349 with 14,000 persons, one-third of the population died of the pest and so severe was the blow that in the fifteenth century that city had a population of scarcely 10,000 people.[5] Of the entire population of Frankfurt in 1440, namely 8,700, 67 per cent were employed in business, 12 per cent were unproductive, 11 per cent managed some establishment, and 10 per cent belonged to the professional classes.[6]

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[1] Steinhausen, 340–58.

[2] Ibid., 356–8.

[3] Bücher, *Frankfurt*, 35.

[4] Ibid., 10.

[5] Ibid., 17.

[6] Ibid., 215. The percentages in 1387 were 80, 7, 10, and 3.

The secular clergy numbered 85, the monks 80, the knightly orders 20, the foreign clergy 15, and the nuns 40, or a total of 240, or an average of one cleric for every 190 inhabitants.[1] The Jews averaged from one to two hundred and paid an annual Jew tax of about 350 florins.[2] The latter part of the fourteenth century Frankfurt, Rostock, Nuremberg and Hamburg each had a population of about 10,000. In the fifteenth century Leipzig had 4,000 inhabitants (1474); Dresden and Mainz 5,000; Heidelberg 5,200 (1439); Zurich and Basel 10,000; Rostock 14,000; Augsburg 18,000; Nuremberg (1449), Strassburg (1475), and Augsburg (1489) 20,000.[3]

The public debt of the city of Basel in 1390 was 160,000 florins, but by 1430 it had increased to 240,000 florins, which was about 25 per cent of all the private property.[4]

The physical characteristics of a city of the fifteenth century were very pronounced and of a general type. As one approached the city the substantial walls with a deep moat, high watch towers, and gates first attracted attention. Not infrequently an inner wall with gates was also constructed. Outside the chief gate were the gallowses as a warning to evil-doers, and on the sharp points over the gate were the heads of criminals who had forfeited their lives for grave crimes. With these protecting walls each city was a strong fortress, and even villages had similar fortifications. Within the city upon some high point was located the burg, or fortress-like castle. The town-hall, church, and other public buildings, together with the market place, constituted the chief places of interest. Among these old cities Rothenburg in Germany is still in an almost perfect state of preservation.

In Germany most of the cities in the fourteenth century were dirty, with narrow winding streets, unlighted, without sewers, and little thought was given to sanitation. Those fortunate enough to be located on a stream kept the town fairly clean. Cracow appears to have been among the first to enact laws against uncleanliness. Other cities gradually followed. Most of the cities were policed with night watches. Considerable care was taken in many places to bring an adequate water supply into the city at the cost of the community. Fine fountains were common.[1]

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[1] Bücher, 517. These figures were for the fourteenth century. Those for the fifteenth century were: 100, 100, 35, 20, and 50, or a total of 300, or one clerical for every 200 inhabitants.

[2] Ibid., 563. It was reported that in 1298, 100,000 Jews were killed in Franconia, 2,006 in Nuremberg in 1338, and 2,000 in Strassburg in 1349, but these figures are probably an exaggeration. Ibid., 520.

[3] Sternegg, iii, 24–5, 425.

[4] Geering, 218.

The penalties inflicted on those guilty of the violation of law and order were unusually severe in the cities. Breakers of the peace were severely dealt with as is shown by the fact that in 1446 five men who made a noise at night and wounded a few persons were ordered to have their eyes put out. In Breslau those found wandering about at night with arms were publicly branded.[2] These were exceptional punishments, of course, and money fines were more common. Horse thieves were punished by death. Ordinary thieves were sent to the gallows. Skinning alive was not unknown. Death at the stake was meted out to heretics, witches, and unnatural prostitutes. Counterfeiters were branded. Blasphemers had their tongues cut out. Other criminals had their hands cut off, or their ears severed from their heads, or with a stone tied to their neck were thrown into the river to drown. Quarrelling women were chained together and paraded through the city.[3] A dishonest baker was put in a basket and covered with dough. In Frankfurt, 1366–1500, 462 persons were put to death—60 were hanged, 58 beheaded, 91 drowned, 9 on the rack, 25 burned, 1 buried alive, 1 in hot oil, 2 walled in and 215 in other ways.

"The burghers of the free towns are all merchants," said Quirini, the Venetian ambassador. "They live well but dress ill, although there are some very rich people among them. They maintain justice, desire peace, hate the knights heartily and fear the princes, and for this reason the cities form leagues among themselves. The towns are moreover at enmity each with its bishop on account of his desire to exercise temporal as well as spiritual authority over the town. This hostility is increased by the natural ill-feeling between the burghers on the one hand and the knights and princes on the other for the bishops are always chosen from among the knights and princes, since the canons, who have the right to elect the bishop, all belong by descent to the noble classes and not to the burghers."[4] It was remarked that the burghers, particularly in Switzerland and south Germany, were so ambitious to dress well, and had the means with which to do it, that the noble in outward appearance no longer had any advantage over the city man, or indeed even the farmer. Sebastian Brandt declared that the business man of that day wanted to be a nobleman; the noble a Freiherr; the Graf a Furst; the Furst a König.[1] On the other hand Machiavelli commented on the simplicity of German life: "They live as poor people; they do not build, know nothing of the luxuries of dress, and have no costly house furniture. Richly nourished by bread and meat and a warm stove, and they are satisfied." But he was probably speaking of the day labourers rather than the well-to-do burghers.[2] In general the rich burghers set the pace in Germany in luxury, big dinners, and loud carousing. The nobles and men of moderate means attempted to follow them. In Nuremberg the city had a special wagon to carry home the public drunks found on the streets in the morning! The deportment of the burghers in public was coarse and vulgar. The council of Regensburg sought to limit extravagance in dress by limiting the ladies to eighteen garments. One woman changed her gowns fourteen times in one week and possessed a wardrobe that cost 3,000 gulden, or about $7,500 in the money of to-day.[3] Herr Uellin Eberhard rose from a blacksmith to a man worth 8,000 florins in 1429 and sixteen years later he possessed 13,000 florins.[4]

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[1] Schultz, i, 24–7, 55.

[2] Klose, *Script. rer. Siles.*, iii, 65.

[3] Schultz, i, 28–46.

[4] Quoted in Robinson, *Readings*, ii, 36.

To such lengths did the extravagances of dress go that the city officials found it necessary in Germany to regulate the dress of both men and women. John Huss denounced the luxurious clothing of his day—particularly the short skirts and low necks and the tendency to do up the hair in "horns". Ulm and other cities had "clothing laws" which forbade the use of gold, silver, and pearls. Nuremberg had a police regulation regarding the style of bathing suits. The synod of Lübeck forbade the clergy wearing coloured garments and gold and silver ornaments. The council of Mainz laid a ban on a new style of shoe. These examples are only a few of the many enacted in that period.[5] False hair and false busts were condemned. The Vienna chronicler, Thomas Ebendorfer, in 1456 complained about the women who dyed and curled, or bleached, their hair, and painted their faces. The men, he declared, aped the women in this respect until only their whiskers revealed their sex.[1] The council of the city of Leipzig decreed in 1463 "That the public characters and wild women should not appear in public wearing corals, ribbons, nor silk skirts, nor silver and gold". At the same time long dresses reaching to the ground were forbidden.[2] The garments of nuns were also regulated. The Elector Ernst of Saxony in 1482 decreed: "That henceforth among the gentle folk no woman or maid shall have made or wear a dress that drags on the ground more than two ells" and low necks were likewise tabooed. Women were limited to two suits and men to one. The country people were ordered not to use foreign cloth, and the value of adornments was limited.[3] Ratisbon was more liberal in 1485 when it passed a rule that the wives and daughters of the burghers should be allowed 8 dresses, 6 long cloaks, 3 dancing gowns, 1 pleated wrapper, 2 pearl hair-bands, 8 tiaras of gold set with pearls, and 2 veils.

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[1] Bezold, 43. [2] Ibid., 36. [3] Ibid., 39. [4] Geering, 219. [5] Schultz, i, 315.

The complaints about extravagant apparel were very numerous and appeared in all the writings of the day. Sebastian Brandt in his *Narrenschiff* (1494) had much to say on the subject. Geiler von Kaiserberg in his sermons made a fierce attack on the fads and fashions of his day. On 5th March, 1498, he preached a sermon on "Beards" in which he discussed four types of face—those with whiskers imitating the Italians and Spanish; those wearing Turkish beards; those cleanly shaven; and those who never shaved but wore their hair on both head and face as long as nature would let it grow.[4] Female barbers existed in Germany in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. John Agricola complained of the tyranny of dame fashion who forced an annual change in clothing, shoes, and hats.[5] Bodily cleanliness was insisted upon, and one contemporary recommended the habit of bathing at least "once in two weeks". Some conception of the money lavished upon articles of adornment may be gained from the following list for the year 1490: one wide-flapped hat cost 9 florins; a riding hat 2 pounds; a black hat 63 denari; a pair of deerskin trousers 1 florin; 3 pairs of women's shoes 60 denari; 2 pairs of women's slippers 70; 2 pairs of men's slippers 70; a pair of men's shoes 76;

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[1] Schultz, ii, 87; Kellner, *Fastnachtsspiele*, 1276.

[2] Ibid., ii, 325.

[3] Ibid., 333.

[4] Ibid., 341.

[5] Ibid., 358.

a pair of children's shoes from 16 to 56; half-soling a pair of men's shoes 28; and a horn comb 13.[1]

Among the burghers it was a great honour to have a large family. The Augsburg historian, Burkhard Zwink, was the father of seventeen children by six women. One of his sons boasted of eighteen children. Albrecht Dürer was one of a family of eighteen children. The birth of a child was made a festal affair. The mother in her finely decorated bed was visited by all her friends and presented with gifts for herself and child. The burghers were as a rule solicitous for a sound education for their children, hence good common schools for the teaching of reading, writing, and some arithmetic were found in all the cities. Excellent Latin schools were also common and the universities were patronized by many of the sons of the burghers.[2] The age was one of coarse humour, wild sports, joyous songs, crude joking and vulgarity even in the church festivals. Drunkenness was frequent among both sexes. In Glogau the wives of the burghers arranged regular drinking banquets at each other's houses at their husbands' expense. Marital infidelity was so common that the authorities of that city passed a law punishing the violation of the marriage vow with death. In 1510 these women's clubs were forbidden by law to serve intoxicating drinks at their meetings.[3] The life of the period was reflected in the paintings, sketches, poetry, music, and gargoyles in architecture.

In 1521 Luther wrote: "Read all the chronicles and it will be seen that from the birth of Christ on during all these centuries nothing similar has been seen. Such building and planting is not so common in all the world; such expensive and frequent feasting and drinking has never been seen. Hence clothing has become so costly that it cannot go higher. Who has read of such business as now covers the world and swallows it up? So the arts increase and continue to increase; painting, embroidery, and carving—such as have not been seen since Christ's birth. Hence there are to-day such keen, intelligent people, who let nothing be concealed, so that to-day a boy of twenty years knows more than twenty doctors have known previously."[4]

A pronounced breach existed between the city man and the village peasant. In 1483 an Augsburg author wrote: "O du grober, hertsinniger, rüdischer, esslicher, wald-esslicher, gebenrischer, grablicher, unbrauchsamer, untätiger—geyziger, geiriger, unsatiger, lüstiger, frösslicher Baur." Another wrote:

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[1] Schultz, ii, 353.
[2] Ibid., i, 180, 187, 202; Steinhausen, 453, 456.
[3] Meyer, *Studien*, 12.
[4] Quoted in Steinhausen, 416.

"Der Baur ist an Ochsen statt
Nur das er keine Hörner hat."[1]

The great merchants of Germany carried on a trade in everything that would bring profit—even human beings, as slaves. Geiler von Kaiserberg said: "One could not sell castrated children, particularly if they were Romans, but could easily sell other kinds."[2]

Instead of being despised by the nobility, wealthy merchants and business men began to play a conspicuous part in the social life of the day. The literature of the period very noticeably reveals the fact that they began to take a more prominent place. Indeed a new literature and a new art for this class of citizens began to appear. Under Philip Augustus in France, and more especially under later rulers, the merchants were not only consulted about enterprises of a business character, but also appointed to office.

153. *The Common People*

The common people constituted the vast majority of the population of Europe who lived in the villages as agricultural peasants, or were employed by the nobles and the burghers as servants and day labourers. In the eleventh century Bishop Adalberon explained that society was divided into two classes: the nobles and the clergy, and the miserable serfs who worked for their keep. By the fifteenth century the great and powerful middle class had emerged everywhere, thus making three very distinct classes.[3] The common people in the fifteenth century may be said to have constituted a distinct class and had in turn come to be divided into very pronounced groups in the various countries.

First there were the serfs, the lowest class,[4] who held small farms for which they were obliged to perform certain feudal services and pay feudal dues, which differed greatly in different countries and in various parts of the same country. They belonged to the land and were sold with it like stationary property. There were many different classes of serfs even on the same estate. The serfs on the Church lands were as a rule in a somewhat better position. In Germany in the fifteenth century serfs were found only in Pomerania, but after the social revolutions of the sixteenth century the institution of serfdom became quite general. In Pomerania itself, where conditions were thought to be the worst, Kautzow, a contemporary, said: "The peasants of Pomerania pay a modest toll and render, besides, certain personal services. They are well-to-do, and when they wish no longer to belong to the manor they can, with the permit of the lord, sell their holdings and pay him ten per cent of the price; then they are free to go and take their children where they will."[1] Thus it is seen that the tenants were "bound to the soil" in the sense that they could not leave their holdings without the lord's consent, but they had personal liberty. Their leases were for the most part perpetual and descended to the eldest son, or, in case of no male heirs, to the eldest daughter. In the event of no children, it reverted to the lord. Hence with perpetual leases the tenants felt that they owned the land and took considerable pains to improve it. The principle of "the indivisibility of property" universally hindered the breaking up of properties and was a great protection to the peasant population. Although the eldest child inherited all land and chattels, the other children were entitled to support from the property. At the end of the fifteenth century most of the agricultural lands in Germany were in the hands of these tenants, and the lords received merely rent and service for the use. Prosperous peasant proprietors were somewhat common.[2] Count Öttingen gave his labourers and serfs soup and four courses for their noon meal, and three courses for supper, with two dishes of meat.[3] The Saxon law of 1482 ordered the day labourer to be content with four dishes daily and five on feastdays.[4] Many of the German lords laboured with might and main to revive feudalism after it had practically disappeared.[5]

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[1] Schultz, i, 433. [2] Schultz, i, 129. [3] Lavisse, IV, ii, 152.

[4] There were some slaves in Europe from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries, but they were few in number, and were nearly always foreigners of African descent. They were held as property and had no rights. In Florence as late as 1526, there was a traffic in Mohammedan slaves. The first considerable cargo of Negro slaves was brought to Portugal in 1444, and was followed by others. But the traffic undoubtedly would have died out but for the discovery of America. Brace, *Gesta Christi*, 363, 364, 367. The traffic in slaves spread from Italy to Germany and was carried on by the Jews. Schulte, *Gesch. der M. A. Handels*, i, 151.

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[1] Janssen, i, 312.

[2] Ibid., 309, 310.

[3] Bezold, 43.

[4] Ibid., 43.

[5] Ibid., 46.

The second class of the common people consisted of those peasants who had managed to emancipate themselves from serfdom and were called "free" peasants. They were not free in the modern sense, because they still performed definite services for their lords, but these obligations were not so onerous as those borne by the serfs. From the thirteenth century on, various causes, economic and otherwise, began to improve the condition of the peasants so that by the fifteenth century the status of the peasant "was better than it had ever been, either before or since within historical times in northern and western Europe".[1] These favourable conditions had produced a peasantry not downtrodden and starved, but proud, robust, and conscious of their rights, and numerically the largest part of the population of Europe. By the close of the fifteenth century many villages of these free peasants were found on the German manors and on the lands of the imperial cities, and also in Italy, France, and England. They constituted the masses of the people.[2] Their farms included from 3 to 500 morgans of land.

The prosperity and vain display of this class of peasants were the occasion of much contemporary comment. Wimpfeling writes: "The peasants in our district and in many parts of Germany have become, through their riches, stiff-necked and ease-loving. I know peasants who at the weddings of their sons and daughters, or the baptism of their children, make so much display that a house and field might be bought therewith, and a small vineyard to boot. Through their riches, they are oftentimes spendthrifts in food and in clothing, and they drink wines of a big value." Of the Austrian peasants a chronicler related: "They wore better garments and drank better wine than their lords." [3]

"The lower classes," wrote the Venetian ambassador, Quirini, in 1507, "whether subject to the princes or the free towns, are poor, wild by nature, do not fear to endanger their lives, and are very loyal to their lords. They are loath to exert themselves to earn anything, and the little they get they speedily drink up." [4] Sebastian Brandt regretted that the peasants, who earlier had been content with water, now had wine, and plenty of money, and were carried away by the desire

[1] Bax, 198.

[2] Lamprecht, i, 623.

[3] Ibid., 199.

[4] Quoted in Robinson, *Readings*, ii, 36–7.

for costly clothing. Geiler von Kaiserberg wrote: "To a peasant one now says 'Gnädiger Herr'. And why not? asks the farmer. I have as much money and as fine clothes as a 'Gnädiger Herr'." A Westphalian noble complained that a peasant had more credit than ten nobles. Certainly in the fifteenth century the peasants were not a "poor race of slaves" in South Germany as Sebastian Münster said they were in the sixteenth. Indeed, the peasants themselves often spoke of the "poor lord" and the nobles felt the comment so keenly that they considered suggestions for suppressing their independence and prosperity. Abbot John II of Kempten sought in every way to revive serfdom on his estates, and said that he was attempting to do only what many other lords were doing.[1]

The population of Germany was increasing at a normal, healthy ratio as the few available figures bearing on the subject prove. The increase from 1100 to 1150 was 5 per cent; 1150 to 1200 4 per cent; and 1200 to 1237 35 per cent. The information for the period from 1237 onward is very meagre but all evidence available points to the continuation of this growth.[2] The increase in the population of the cities and larger villages was quite remarkable during the period from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, but that increase was due to the strong influx of people from the country to the town rather than to the higher birth-rate.[3] The thinly-settled frontier of that day was to the eastward and many of the more hardy, ambitious, and adventuresome of the peasants emigrated from the older sections of Germany to eastern Germany.

The peasant tenant as a rule had the privilege of sending his children, without the lord's consent, into the service of other masters or to the city. Nor were the feudal services ordinarily particularly burdensome. In Austria the peasants worked but twelve days out of the year for the lord, and during that time they were fed by the lord. In Strassburg only three days annually were required, and in Augsburg only two days. The "death tax", which was a sort of inheritance tax and theoretically made good the loss sustained by the lord, required that on the death of a tenant the best animal or chattel went to the lord. This tax was levied in the cities as well as in the villages and often amounted to 25 per çent. In Austria it was only 5 per cent and in the Tyrol only 1 per cent. In exacting these feudal dues the law demanded that mercy be shown.[1] Even when the peasants had succeeded in substituting a fixed money payment for the feudal services and dues, they were not absolutely free except in the Alps and in north-western Germany, for they were still dependent upon somebody for some things. The Weistümer of south-west Germany show the peasants happy and contented, but in other sections the feudal customs and exactions were so heavy that the lot of the peasants was hard and unendurable. Grimm declared that the old obedience and serfdom were easier and preferable to the conditions of modern labourers. The mass of the peasants, however, did not comprehend that the economic changes were for their good, but believed them to be more burdensome than ever. Hence the complaints of the peasants about conditions in the fifteenth century were louder than ever. Yet at the same time, paradoxical as it may seem, the peasants were assailed for their wealth and pride. The simple historic fact seems to be that the freer the peasants became, the more keenly they felt the remaining feudal obligations, and the more they clamoured for complete emancipation. Their discontent was a hopeful rather than a discouraging sign.[2]

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[1] Bezold, 43–5.
[2] Lamprecht, *Deutsche Wirtschaftsleben im Mittelalter*, i, 149, 164.
[3] Ibid., 149.

The third class of the common people was the day labourers, who lived in the villages and cities and were free to come and go, and to sell their labour to whomsoever they pleased. Many of them were cobblers, blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, miners, or followed some other trade. The large majority of them had no special trade, however, hence depended upon manual toil for their support. These trades people and the day labourers occupied a relatively high social position, and on the whole lived much more independently than a modern man might imagine.

The village life of the fifteenth century was well pictured by John Boëmus. The common people, he informs us, built their own wooden houses, which were low and thatched with straw, and often had connecting cow-barns. These "country people" ate bread, oat-broth, and vegetables, drank milk and water, and wore a linen coat, brown hat, and a pair of leather boots. They were restless, industrious, and unclean.

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[1] Janssen, i, 318.

[2] Bezold, 40–3.

They sold the produce of their farms and cattle in the city and with the proceeds purchased what was needed. There were comparatively few handworkers among them. Each village had its church, which was the centre of all religious and social life. On Sunday afternoons the people old and young rested and played under the shady trees. The young danced to the music of the fife, while the elders enjoyed themselves drinking wine. No man went about unarmed, and swords were commonly carried. Each village chose from two to four " Bauermeister ", who constituted a sort of local government, although the real political power was in the hands of the lord of the village. The land belonged mostly to the lord, who forced the peasants to farm his lands and reap his harvests. " These poor, miserable, enslaved people have to do everything the lord calls on them to do."[1] Sebastian Franck expressed his pity for " The tired-souled people, the peasants, cobblers, shepherds, etc.—the fourth class, whose housing, life, clothing, food, knowledge, etc., are well known. They are very industrious people, downtrodden and burdened with tithes, dues, and taxes." [2]

The great majority of the villages were small and very numerous in Germany, and no doubt elsewhere. Some of them advantageously situated as centres of industry developed into cities. Since none of the fifteenth century houses remain, comparatively little is known about them.[3] All of them belonged to some overlord—a bishop, a noble, a king, or a city—to whom a toll of wine, bread, flour, and other articles had to be paid.[4] Ordinarily the streets were not in a good condition, although the king's highway had to have a certain width and be kept clean and free. No person could be beaten on the king's road.[5] Walls with gates and towers surrounded the village and were protected by a moat.[6] In addition to the church, the village boasted of its town hall, which was commonly used as a playhouse.[7] Inns and drinking houses were prevalent.[8]

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[1] *Omnium gentium mores*, ii, 12.

[2] *Weltbuches* (1534), fol. xlvii a.

[3] Schultz, i, 145.

[4] Ibid., 151 ; Grimm, ii, 25, 59, 807.

[5] Andernacher Banding (1498), i, 193 ; ii, 629 ; iii, 28, 47, 68, 79 ; iv, 399 ; v, 190, 195, 663, 711.

[6] Ibid., iii, 696 ; iv, 214 ; ii, 157 ; i, 456, 459, 497, 632, 811.

[7] Ibid., i, 448, 789 ; ii, 157, 318, 322, 340, 429, 439, 443, 489, 504 ; iii, 419, 435, 777.

[8] Grimm, iv, 218.

The danger from fire was so great that some villages like Seligenstadt in 1423 prohibited thatched roofs. Hence shingles replaced straw; then tiling and slate replaced the shingles. Stone and brick buildings gradually replaced the wooden structures. With the Renaissance came a great craze for decoration in paint and ornament. Bible texts and wise sayings were placed in conspicuous places on the outside of buildings.[1]

The houses with straw roofs were built of wood, which was used even for the chimneys, and some of them had bathrooms.[2] Gardens and orchards surrounded the cottages.[3] The furniture was simple and strong.[4] Pigs and cows were kept to supply food and drink.[5] The peasants were well-clothed,[6] and had working garments and Sunday suits.[7] The furniture, at first simple and strong, became more fanciful and artistic.[8]

So comfortable were the peasants and day labourers that sumptuary laws were passed to curtail their extravagant dress and food. The Reichstag of Lindau in 1497 decreed that members of these classes " shall neither make nor wear cloth that costs more than half a gulden the ell, neither shall they wear gold, pearls, velvet, silk, nor embroidered clothes, nor shall they permit their wives or their children to wear such ".[9] In 1483 Erbach from the Swabian Odenwald described the fare of labourers, as follows: " All journeymen that are hired, and likewise serfs; also the serving men and maids, shall each day be given twice meat and what thereto belongeth, with half a small measure of wine, save on feast days, when they shall have fish or other food that nourishes. Whoever in the week has toiled, shall also on Sunday and feast days make merry after mass and preaching. On feast days also roasted meat enough. Moreover, they shall be given, to take home with them, a great loaf of bread and so much of flesh as two at one meal may eat."[10] The peasants were free to leave the villages and take up their residence elsewhere.[11] Many of them became prosperous peasant proprietors with tenants of their own.[12] It was an honour for a peasant to have a very large family, hence it was not infrequent for parents to boast of eighteen or twenty children.

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[1] Grimm, *Weisthümer*, i, 508; Baader, *Nürnberger Polizeiordnung.*, 287.

[2] Lamprecht, i, 509, 543; Andernacher Banding (1498), i, 82, 587; iii, 630; v, 232.

[3] Lamprecht, iii, 583; i, 313.

[4] Ibid., iv, 363, 690, 702.

[5] Schultz, i, 165.

[6] Ibid., 169.

[7] Lamprecht, ii, 24, 102; iii, 43; v, 374.

[8] Schultz, i, 95 ff.

[9] Bax, 199.

[10] Ibid., 201.

[11] Ibid., 177.

[12] Ibid., 171; *Weisthümer*, v, 669.

Rogers pictured the fifteenth century as the golden age of agriculture in England, but the facts do not substantiate the assertion. The truth is that agriculture declined to so great a degree that the soil could not nourish the nation, consequently the common people suffered. The pay of farm labourers was exceptionally high, the price of salt doubled in a century, and the cost of living was greatly increased. On the other hand, manufacturing prospered, good wages were paid and high prices were received for the products.[1]

The agriculturist of that day, unfortified by the scientific knowledge of the present time, had his crops destroyed more frequently by insect pests, droughts and floods. In the valleys particularly floods were very common. Thus in the Mosel valley six great floods were recorded in the thirteenth century and seven in the fourteenth. Earthquakes were not unknown, although not very injurious to life and property. In consequence of the uncertainty of crops famines were common, and led to many deaths. Thus in the Mosel valley there were seventeen famines in the twelfth century, four in the thirteenth, seven in the fourteenth, and three in the fifteenth. During these periods of famine prices rose six and seven fold, and caused the greatest suffering among the peasant classes.

The position of the artisan in the towns was proportionately better than that of the peasant. The collapse of the feudal system turned a multitude out of employment to drift about shiftless in a world utterly unprepared to care for them. Vagrants were never so numerous in Europe as in the earlier part of the sixteenth century. Many entered the services of the princes and kings as mercenary soldiers and thus helped to create the standing armies which were used to centralize the political power of the rulers at the expense of the authority of the nobility. Others became tramps and professional beggars, who even organized into guilds with their own masters and other officers. Still others became journeymen, craftsmen, and unskilled labourers in the cities. Thus was constituted the proletariat of the day in Europe. In the fifteenth century, however, the day labourers were much better off than the peasants. Never before had wages been so high and never since, all things considered, have the common workmen been " so well situated ".[1]

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[1] Lavisse and Rambaud, iii, 409.

In the village were to be found the miller, the brewer, the blacksmith, the shoemaker, the builder, the weaver, and the tradesmen, with their apprentices, who worked for wages or did piecework, and were in consequence more independent than the peasants.[2]

France at the close of the Hundred Years War was filled with dangerous groups of tramps, vagabonds, and bandits.[3] These classes were well organized into societies with their own officials and laws. The " Coquillurts of Bourgogne " had a hierarchical government. Les Caimaus in 1449 had their own king and queen. Les Egyptiens, Baladins, and Charlatans were well known for their nefarious activities.[4]

The long period of warfare and the social and economic changes in France produced great changes in the status of the peasants during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. At the time of the first crusade many serfs were partly freed from their harsh surroundings and conditions. When taxes and feudal dues began to be paid in money, many serfs purchased their freedom and a class of free peasants arose. The more ambitious and thrifty of the free peasants gradually emerged as prosperous landed proprietors. Seigneurial political power began to decline, but feudal privileges were clung to more persistently than ever. The Hundred Years War had wrought havoc with agricultural prosperity.[5] Whole sections were practically depopulated. In 1459 one-third of Languedoc perished in a famine. Louis XI at the beginning of his reign was struck with the misery of Flanders and Thomas Basin in taking a tour through that region declared that he found only ruins, sterile fields, uncultivated farms, and a hopeless desert. The men and women who survived were emaciated and looked like wild animals. The monarchs were forced to grant special privileges to encourage the revival of agriculture, but the process was extremely slow. Day labourers, thrown out of employment, suffered still more terribly than the peasants. The *métiers* system came into extensive use during this period.[6]

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[1] Janssen, i, 348.

[2] Lamprecht, i, 586, 588.

[3] Lavisse et Rambaud, iii, 300.

[4] Lavisse, IV, ii, 117–18.

[5] Lavisse et Rambaud, iv, 297.

[6] Lavisse, IV, ii, 123–30 ; Sée, *Les classes rurales et le régime domanial en France*, 1901 ; Ribbe, *Société provençale à la fin du moyen âge*, 1898.

During this period of disorganization the French communes and villages had almost entirely thrown off their dependence upon seigneurial authority, and were ruled by their own municipal magistrates who governed the *métiers* and exacted from them the dues. Merchants were more alert and more careful to collect their dues than the feudal lords. The industrial rules and commercial edicts of the municipalities at the end of the Middle Ages were minute and lengthy, and the magistrates vigorously enforced them. In the fourteenth century, however, these cities and villages which were free from both lords and monarchs, began to be subjected to general royal ordinances, which regulated wages and prices and thus modified the entire industrial system. There was no uniformity in the organization of labour since many privileged corporations existed along with much free labour. In middle and northern France corporations prevailed, while free labour was the rule in other parts. In some places the trades were half organized and half free. Even in Paris free *métiers* existed. It is a great error to believe that the corporations controlled everything. Of course, the free *métiers* did not escape the general rules of the municipality, for they were rigidly watched by the municipal, feudal, and royal officials, and thus limited in their activities. In some villages the patrons fought the corporations and favoured the free *métiers* and the *métier juré*, in fact, was generally preferred to the free *métiers*. For their own good the *métiers* often voluntarily became a corporation. The Hundred Years War tended to destroy the corporations, but they survived and in Poictiers alone between 1455 and 1497 a dozen corporations were either destroyed or created. The prevailing tendency of the fifteenth century was to create an oligarchy of the patrons in each corporation. To destroy that tendency was the supreme social task of that age.[1]

The peasants in the villages imitated the cities in passing ordinances with punishments for crimes and misdemeanours. The stocks were in general use. The punishment for murder was the wheel; theft, the gallows; counterfeiting, being thrust into boiling water; treason, quartering; rape, impaling; "kindsverdilgerin" buried alive or a pierced heart. A slandering woman had to drag a stone through the village, or was driven barefooted by a taunting crowd with brooms around the church. Changing a landmark, or stealing wood was severely punished. In case of rape, if both sides could effect a compromise, the culprit was let off with a light fine. Domestic relations were carefully regulated. Drunkenness was very common and laws were passed to regulate the evil. Women in childbirth were feasted by their friends with cakes and sweet drinks. The council of Nuremburg forbade drunkenness and subjected those guilty to a heavy fine. Cursing and swearing were notoriously common all over Europe. Church councils and synods repeatedly condemned these social evils.[1]

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[1] Lavisse, IV, ii, 131–7.

The revival of the study and application of Roman law had considerably to do with the renaissance of penology. A not uncommon type of punishment was the terrible one of putting out the eyes of the accused. He who injured a standing tree had his intestines tied to the tree and then was driven around the tree until the injured spot was covered. He who set fire to the woods should be laid in a cow- or steer-hide three steps in front of the fire until it burned over him three times; then, whether dead or alive, his deed was atoned for. In South Germany a certain circle of knights castrated every priest who fell into their hands. Unpleasant letters were forced down the throats of the bearers.[2] The death penalty was so commonly inflicted that Laurentius Schmit estimated that up to 1527 in Lübeck 18,489 persons had been executed. Highway robbers were beheaded. Those guilty of sodomy, heresy, and witchcraft were burned at the stake. Other criminals for various offences were loaded down with ball and chains and thrown into filthy dungeons; walled up in a cell alive; the tongue was cut out for blasphemy; the hands were cut off; and the ears were severed from the head.[3] Laws to protect the forests appeared in the second half of the thirteenth century, and became very pronounced in the fourteenth, while reservation of the forests began as early as the tenth century.[4]

The German peasants on the average were not so badly off. They were independent, busy, active, well-fed, happy, and had various opportunities to make headway. Of course, under the feudal system the condition of the peasant was often made almost unendurable by the landlord—bishop, abbot or nobleman—who, after squandering his regular income levied new taxes on his peasants and brought such pressure to bear as would force them to pay. A poor day labourer had to live on about 12 or 13 groschen a week, and with that sum clothe his large family, pay his rent, secure food, and have a few coppers for his beer and for gambling on Sunday.[1] By the end of the fifteenth century the lot of the peasant in German lands had changed for the worse. The causes of this transformation were :—

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[1] Schultz, i, 59–60. [2] Bezold, 48–9. [3] Steinhausen, 420.
[4] Lamprecht, *Deutsches Wirtschaftsleben im Mittelalter*, i, 139, 517.

1. The revival of Roman law and political science which denied that the peasants had those " rights " which they had enjoyed under the earlier German laws. Popular hatred of Roman law appeared as early as the thirteenth century and became more pronounced as the years passed by. Caesar Heisterbach, Thomas von Zirkloria, and Hugo von Trimberg went so far as to call the jurists " unchristian ". " Money bought everything," they said. This opposition was pronounced in England, Scandinavia, and Switzerland, as well as in Germany. Sebastian Brandt, Heisterbach, and Wimpfeling all complained against the injustice of the Roman Law.[2]

2. The revival of Roman law with its concept of private property and the status of the common people, gave the feudal lords the opportunity to revive the latent powers of the feudal system and to enforce them quite generally throughout Germany.

The introduction of the Roman imperial code of laws to replace the national code in Germany in the fifteenth century gave " a sort of earthquake shock " to all existing legal usages. This foreign code fostered princely despotism and perniciously affected social conditions. The peasants and townspeople felt themselves robbed of their ancient rights and privileges and threatened with the revival of bond-servitude, which had disappeared by the middle of the fifteenth century. Hence they broke out in armed revolt against the obnoxious foreign code and the despotism it fostered. To this resistance were added socialistic and communistic tendencies championed by apostles of social and individual equality. The working classes in town and country united in a common cause, and received help from many proletariat leaders who sprang from the discontented lower nobility.

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[1] Janssen, *Hist. of the Ger. People*, ii, 289.

[2] Ibid., 290.

The German princes were the most enthusiastic advocates of the revival of the Roman code, because they hoped, through it, to strengthen their own authority. In consequence it was introduced into the German courts, and before many years learned lawyers replaced the nobles in conducting courts, and the principle gained ground that legal affairs could not be satisfactorily settled without the aid of a lawyer. A crowd of lawyers soon appeared, and they were hated and detested by the people. Whimpfeling in 1507 called them "blood-suckers of the people" who to fill their purses "make lawsuits out of nothing". Ulrich Zasius wrote: "The lawyers poison the laws; they mock the judges, disturb the public peace, bewilder the people, and are hated both by angels and men." Sebastian Brant put them on a par with robber-knights: "The one steals in secret, the other openly." Geiler von Kaiserberg said in one of his sermons: "The lawyers . . . are disturbers of the peace. Instead of settling differences, they foment them in order to make money . . . the richest is right, and whoever gives the most money gets the most law." An unknown author wrote in 1513 that the lawyers had "increased like poisonous weeds" in the last twenty years, and were worse than usurers for "they take away not only your money, but your rights and your honour". A pamphlet in 1493 denounced the lawyers as "law-benders", "cut-purses", "vampires", and "robbers", who ought to be driven from the country. Here and there a mob arose and drove the man of law from the village. This rebellious spirit was held up generally as quite praiseworthy, and many declared that open revolution would be amply justified against a tyranny that rivalled that of Popes and Caesars.[1] Opposition to the introduction of foreign laws, growing discontent with the political affairs, the economic changes creeping over Europe, and the upset of social administration, were among the chief causes of the appearance of a distinct socialistic movement, that made a direct attack on the Medieval Church.[2]

3. The economic pressure incident to the unparalleled rise in prices and the unprecedented ostentation and extravagance of the people generally, which resulted in the abnormally high cost of living, forced many to return to the yoke of feudalism for relief from the intolerable state of affairs.[3]

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[1] Schultz, ii, 534. [2] Bezold, 45. [3] Bax, 195; Steinhausen, 437–40.

In consequence of this social reversion the hatred and rebellious spirit of the people manifested itself in two directions, namely, against the arrogant nobility and against the higher prelates in particular and the officials of the Church generally. Europe was confronted by a series of peasant uprisings against ecclesiastical and political authorities during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In some instances, as in Switzerland, the goal was a peasant republic.[1] The most violent hostility, however, was manifested against the clergy whom the people had come to regard as their enemies instead of their friends. "We will beseech God in Heaven that we may not have to kill the priests," sang the followers of Pankers von Niklashausen in 1476 for "We do not like to bow before the priests".[2] In popular hatred the priests were classed with the Jews:—

"Der pfaffen unde juden gnot
Das macht uns all ein frien mnot."[3]

The clergy were denounced with scorn for their greed of gold, property, and luxury. Fierce rebellions were fomented against the spiritual lords. Hans Böheim preached a revolt against the Bishop of Würzburg in 1476, and the peasants rebelled against the Abbot of Kempten in 1492. In the latter year the famous "cheese and bread" outbreak occurred in Netherlands.[4] Many were the threats of the poor against the rich, and the words of the Magdeburg chronicle in 1402: "Between the rich and the poor there has been an old hatred," were indicative of a strong social movement.[5] Great unrest existed among all classes and there was a more or less seeking, somewhat blindly it is true, for something new, a material betterment, a sort of unknown social readjustment.[6] Hence when an endeavour was made to force the peasant to return to an intolerable former condition of serfdom, the peasants, conscious of the injustice of the demands of the lords and of the disadvantageous comparison with their former happier condition, were determined to maintain the privileges so long enjoyed even by armed resistance.

The climax of this movement came in 1525, with the outbreak of the widespread Peasants' Revolt. Responsibility for the movement, so the cloister of Roth declared, rested upon the shoulders of "the clergy and the nobles, who had so openly preached what they had so long heard that the poor should be everywhere freed". "This is the true Evangel," cried the peasants of Swabia, "the old priests have preached falsely and should all be killed." The changes were rung on the watchword, "Christian freedom." "Rob the upper to give to the lower clergy," was advocated.[1] The Zwickau prophets urged the distribution of the property of ecclesiastical corporations among the poor.

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[1] Schultz, ii, 635.
[2] Steinhausen, 441.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Schultz, ii, 635.
[5] Steinhausen, 442–3.
[6] Janssen, iv, 142, 217.

Theoretically the Medieval Church, through its legislation, championed the cause of the peasant and the labourer by insisting that the civic and economic life of the community, as well as its religious life, be regulated according to the eternal laws of right and justice; that the supreme aim of the collective mass of industrial activity should be, not personal interest and advantage, not restless greed for material gain, worldly enjoyment and wealth, but the union of all members in brotherly love and happiness; and that honest toil alone is productive while money is unproductive. Hence the Church branded usurious interest on money as a form of theft. To curb the evil of usury the Church even established lending-houses to make loans at a low interest rate, but they did not prove successful and were abandoned.[2]

In practice, however, these efforts of the Church on behalf of the lower classes were productive of small results, and were quite generally viewed as a mockery. A Christian tract of the time said of Germany: "The law of mercy does not extend in our land to the poor and the labourers; and yet it is much needed by them, and the authorities are very remiss in this matter; hence usury is rampant among us." "The commands of the Church are despised and ignored by the merchants, and all such who possess money, and wish to gain more from day to day, as if their money was theirs and their children's and their children's children's for ever and ever." Unable to secure redress and protection from the ecclesiastical law, the lower classes began to distrust the sincerity of the motives of its leaders, and turned to other sources for justice.

Class hatred and distrust were very pronounced in Europe at the opening of the sixteenth century. The kings and princes viewed all classes below them as their dependents. The nobles and higher clergy looked down upon the knights and poorer nobility, the burghers and the peasants. The knights in turn hated the higher nobles, robbed the wealthy burghers and despised the poor people. The burghers were jealous of the privileges and titles of the upper classes and had little sympathy for the toilers. The peasants and day labourers naturally were embittered against those socially and economically their superiors and consequently were willing to give ear to all sorts of schemes, even the wildest, for a redress of their grievance. From this condition, fraught with so many grave possibilities, the Medieval Church was destined to undergo a series of shocks from which she emerged shattered, weakened, and robbed of a large portion of her rightful heritage. Just as feudalism, after playing its rôle in European civilization for several centuries, was giving way to new social, political, and economic systems and readjustments—just as scholasticism was driven out by the new learning—so the medieval ecclesiastical system was to experience, during the sixteenth century, a radical transformation.

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[1] Steinhausen, 447–9.

[2] Janssen, *Hist. of the Ger. People*, ii, 293.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION

154. *Fourteenth Century an Age of Social and Economic Revolts*

ONE of the factors which helped to bring about the decline of the power and influence of the Medieval Church was the series of social and economic revolutions, which broke out in various quarters of Europe, from the fourteenth to the forepart of the sixteenth century.

The early Church had insisted upon the equality of all men in the sight of God, had praised voluntary poverty, and had encouraged and practised community of property. It had taught, with considerable emphasis, that private property had come into the world as a result of the fall of man. The medieval Church gave the stamp of its approval to these ideas, but, in actual life failed utterly to put them into practice. Ascetic orders at various times, with the approbation of the Papacy, sought to put the early ideals into operation, but ere long dropped them by the wayside and compromised with the good things of earth. Heretical sects like the Waldenses made community of property one of their tenets and thus helped to keep the idea alive. It was both natural and logical, therefore, that the peasants, in their revolts against feudal and ecclesiastical oppression from the fourteenth century onward, should include these radical principles in their reform programmes. In that day when every town, large or small, was more or less of a self-sufficing unit intellectually, industrially, and socially, social and political ideas struck deeper root and took firmer hold of people's minds and hearts than to-day with the myriads of attractions of modern life and relatively more satisfactory institutions. Like the mysterious cake in the Indian mutiny of 1857, ideas were transmitted personally with a power the modern newspaper does not possess. Just in proportion as the class distinctions were more sharply defined, and less easily broken, the class spirit was stronger and characterized by a greater solidarity of purpose.

The decline of the social influence of the Church in the fourteenth century is quite noticeable and unmistakable. Its hold on politics and national life was relaxed. The power of the monastic orders over the people was decreasing. Dissent to the creed of the Church and opposition to its ecclesiastical system were avowed by many individuals. Its missionary and crusading zeal had subsided. Superstitious abuses, detected by many a sharp eye, had grown up. The clergy were cut off from the new spirit in science and letters, as is shown in the writings of Roger Bacon, Chaucer, and Wiclif. All these conditions made it easier for organized social discontent to make itself manifest. The doctrine of popular sovereignty, coupled with the idea of Christian equality and brotherhood, produced a dangerous intoxicant of social unrest. The masses were put in a state of ferment with every political and economic change and many threats of violence were made against the wealthy princes, prelates, and industrial leaders as the instigators of all the evils of the times. " They are full night and day," cried the people, " while our bellies are empty." Force alone would usher in for them the golden age of plenty and freedom.

155. *Social Revolution in England*

In England the Black Death (1348–1350) marks the beginning of the severance of the Church from the people. Before that time the clergy on the whole had felt the same interests as the mass of the people. About half of the people were carried off by the dread plague, which revisited the land no less than five times before the end of the century and afflicted every country in Europe.[1] Cultivation of the soil became well nigh impossible. " The sheep and cattle strayed through the fields and corn, and there was none left who could drive them out." Harvests rotted on the ground. Labour became very scarce. The demand was so great for help that wages rose to a point where the landlords complained and sought to regulate both labour and pay by the Statute of Labourers in 1351.[2]

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[1] Traill, *Social England*, ii, 183.

[2] Gasquet, *Black Death*.

Meanwhile, the ecclesiastical reform movement of Wiclif arose. He appealed from the churchmen to the people and turned from Latin treatises to brief tracts in English. Furthermore, through his English version of the Bible and his order of " poor priests " he brought the fundamental problems of medieval thought down to the level and arena of popular discussion. According to Knighton every other man in England about 1390 was a Lollard. These Lollards condemned not only ecclesiastical abuses, doctrines, and rites, but also war, capital punishment, and luxuries. It is a very significant fact that Wiclif's religious reformation parallels the Peasant Revolt of 1381, but the charge that he was responsible for the social uprising is not wholly true. Many other forces contributed and co-operated—the results of the Black Death, the demoralizing influences of the long war, the grievances against the feudal lords, the dissatisfaction of the craftsmen with the oppressive guilds, the spread of doctrines like those of the wandering priest, John Ball, and watchwords borrowed from *Piers Plowman*—all these causes are needed to fully account for the outbreak, for they produced a widespread restlessness among the masses during the latter half of the fourteenth century.[1]

The immediate occasion for the rebellion was the levying of an objectionable tax on all the people. A petition to Parliament in 1377 stated that villains were refusing to pay their customary services to the lords; and that they were assembling in large numbers to resist the collection of feudal dues. The same year Parliament imposed a poll-tax of 4*d*. on every layman and the ecclesiastical convocation taxed all the clergy a like amount. In 1379 the poll-tax was graduated and levied on all above 16, according to rank, so that itranged from 4*d*. on the labourer to £4 on the earl. In 1380 a third poll-tax of 1*s*. was levied on every person above 15, and collected according to ability to pay in each town and manor.

Now it must be remembered, first, that this was a new tax, and such a tax always incites opposition, and, secondly, that it fell on everybody, hence included many who had never before paid a tax. In the third place the method of collecting the tax gave rise to unfairness and favouritism. As a result of these circumstances, a widespread discontent arose among those who were already disgruntled on account of reasons mentioned above. The riots broke out, first in Essex, then Kent, and soon spread over all southern and eastern England. By June, 1381, it was estimated that 60,000 rebellious peasants and labourers had gathered at Blackheath. Chief among the leaders were John Ball and Wat Tyler. Ball, whom Froissart called " the mad priest of Kent ", gained considerable fame as the expounder of the doctrines of Wiclif, principally the idea of social equality. After a collision with the Archbishop of Canterbury, he was imprisoned and excommunicated in 1366, and all persons were forbidden to hear him preach. Persecution only fired him to greater activity, however, and he had much to do in stirring up the rising of 1381. At Blackheath he preached to the crowd from the text " When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman ? " and urged the rioters to kill all the lords and lawyers in the kingdom. Tyler was the leader of the uprising in Kent, and led this branch of the mob to Blackheath. Other leaders of the insurgents were the parish priests who incited the peasants against the tax-collectors, the lawyers, and the feudal lords.[1] Numerous savage outbreaks took place throughout the country, but the chief attack was made by the Blackheath mob, led by Ball and Tyler on London, where they were joined by the rabble of the city. At a conference with the boy king, Richard II, Tyler demanded the immediate abolition of serfdom and all feudal dues, the freedom of labour and trade, and general amnesty for all the rebels. Richard had no choice but to concede these demands, and charters were at once drawn up incorporating the concessions.[2] Meanwhile, the mob pillaged the city, dragged forth Archbishop Sudbury and Sir Robert Hales from the Tower and murdered them. The next day Tyler further demanded of Richard II the confiscation of all ecclesiastical property and the institution of social equality. A conflict ensued in which Tyler was slain, and the mob dispersed. Ball fled but was captured and together with 109 accomplices was put to death a month later. The next year the concessions made by the King were revoked by Parliament, and few permanent results followed the uprising. The gentry suppressed the revolt in the country. All unauthorized meetings were forbidden. The peasants were ordered back to the manors. In some instances relief was secured, but serfdom continued far into the sixteenth century.

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[1] Traill, ii, 153.

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[1] Traill, iii, 249.

[2] Cheney, 120.

There is no positive evidence that Wiclif was personally connected with the revolt. One of the leaders, Ball, it is true, confessed that he learned his subversive doctrines from Wiclif, but Wiclif up to this time had stated his communistic views in a purely theoretical manner and always in Latin. Of course, it is possible, and even probable, that his less scrupulous followers translated these ideas in their popular discourses and thus connected Wiclif with the movement. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that Wiclif knew of the excesses and did not openly condemn them, except in a single passage in his pamphlet *On Blasphemy*.[1]

Because of the Hundred Years War, the Black Death, the division of Parliament into two houses in 1341, and the Peasants Revolt of 1381, the fourteenth century saw greater social changes than any other century except the nineteenth. The general awakening and social unrest found expression in popular harangues, sermons, songs, poems, and tracts affirming the rights of the peasant and serf classes. This social revolution, in turn, was one of the most potent assaults on the Medieval Church and went far towards undermining its authority in England. The lower clergy were inclined to side with the revolters, and in some instances actually incited them to deeds of violence. The demand that the Church lands and goods, after a reasonable allowance for the support of the clergy, should be distributed among the people, aroused the intense hostility of the higher clergy. Archbishop Islip of Canterbury and other prelates, by denouncing the covetousness of the clergy, sought to ward off the attack upon themselves and check the discontent The assault upon the monks was especially violent and may have been fomented by the priests. The abbeys of St. Albans and Edmondsbury were plundered, and the monks were generally ill-treated. In the interest of economy the people demanded a single bishop for all England. So many of the clergy had been killed by the Black Death that the Bishop of Norwich was forced to ordain sixty boys for service. The most disastrous effect on the Church, however, was that the State took advantage of conditions to deprive the clergy of much of their political power. The first lay chancellor was appointed in 1340 and in 1370 Parliament restricted the high political offices to laymen. At the same time, following the example of France, the property of the Church and the clergy were subjected to secular taxation. Through these measures an important step was taken towards the creation of an English national Church.

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[1] Poole, *Wicliffe and the Movements for Reform*, London, 1911.

The injustice of the system of tithes, as it appeared to the peasants who suffered under it, may be seen from the words of an English contemporary: "The priests have their tenth part of the corn, meadows, pasture, grass, wood, colts, calves, lambs, pigs, geese, and chickens. Over and beside the tenth part of every servant's wages, wool, milk, honey, wax, cheese, and butter: yea, and they look so narrowly after their profits that the poor wife must be countable to them for every tenth egg, or else she getteth not her rights at Easter, and shall be taken as a heretic."[1]

Jack Cade's Rebellion, which broke out in Kent in 1450, was a political movement caused by unjust taxation, the miscarriage of justice, extortions, official abuses, and the illegitimate control of elections. Only one complaint was economic and none was religious. There was no trace of socialism or democracy, such as characterized the uprising of 1381. Cade and his followers made an attack on London, but were beaten and forced to quit the city. The disorders were continued outside the city, but with the death of Cade the trouble ended.[2]

Kett's Rebellion was occasioned in 1549 by the hardships inflicted by the extensive enclosures of common lands and by the policy of the protector Somerset. Robert Kett transformed a feast at Wymondham in Norfolk into a riotous outbreak. He led his followers, 16,000 in number, to an attack on Norwich. Within the month the mob was defeated by royal troops and Robert Kett with his brother William were executed and the uprising came to naught.[3]

Under Henry VIII several local outbreaks occurred because of the suppression of the monasteries and the expropriation of people from the soil to make room for sheep farms, but none of them had any special social significance.

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[1] Quoted in Seebohm, *Era of the Prot. Revolt*, 60.

[2] Kriehn, *Rising in* 1450, ch. iv and vii; Gairdner, *Houses of Lancaster and York*, ch. vii, § 6.

[3] Russell, *Kett's Rebellion*, 1859; Froude, *Hist. of Eng.*, iv, 440.

156. *Peasant Uprisings in France*

In France a widespread uprising of the peasants occurred in 1458. It began in Beauvoisis, spread over Picardy, and infected the whole kingdom, and was called La Jacquerie. The chief causes were the hardships suffered under the feudal system and the outrages and irregularities imposed by the Hundred Years War. The last continuator of Nangis says: "They began it from sheer necessity and love of justice, for their lords oppressed instead of defending them." The ill-treatment and wrongs suffered at the hands of the feudal lords, lay and ecclesiastical, from whom they had every reason to expect protection, incited them to fury. During the war they suffered frightfully, were pillaged and insulted by the soldiers and despised by the burghers as serfs and bondsmen. The battle of Poictiers taught them that their oppressors were not invincible. The revolt of Marcel in Paris in 1357 against the regent and his counsellors gave them hopes of success. The nobles were all at swords-points and hence unable to present a united resistance. Consequently the peasants, or Jacques, under the leadership of a well-educated, eloquent, tactful warrior named Caillet, formed an armed band variously estimated at from 6,000 to 20,000,[1] and went from castle to castle and town to town burning, plundering and murdering. About thirty fortified places were destroyed, many of the nobles and bishops were slain, and towns were desolated. The burghers of Paris and Meaux sent a force to help the peasants besiege the fortress at Meaux held by the nobles.[2] The letters of amnesty granted by the regent on 10th August, 1358, stated that peasants, labourers, burghers and even gentlemen were among the insurrectionists.[3] After about six weeks of success the death of Caillet, the pinch of famine, the ravages of the Black Death, and particularly the organization of the nobility completely defeated the rebellion. The reaction of the nobility against the peasants was speedy and shockingly bloody even for that day. The historical significance of the outbreak lies in the fact that it shows the possibility of danger from the peasants who were becoming self-conscious of their rights and wrongs.[4]

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[1] Froissart gives the number as 100,000.

[2] Kitchin, *Hist. of France*, ch. 2, § 3.

[3] De Vericour, "La Jacquerie," given in *Royal Hist. Soc. Transactions*, i.

[4] Luce, *Histoire de la Jacquerie*, Paris, 1859 and 1895.

Discontent among the common people did not cease, however, with the suppression of La Jacquerie and the peasantry, although better off in some respects than in Germany, felt themselves the burdened class. In northern France, especially Normandy, feudal serfdom had been abolished, while in most parts services in labour had been changed into fixed rents paid in produce. Still the peasants suffered from many of the remnants of feudalism. Their growing crops were open to the lord's game. They had tolls, fees, and heriots to pay, and forced labour to give on the roads. The feudal lord was the master separated from them by an impassable barrier of blood. In addition the Church added her claims in tithes, endless fees, and other obnoxious money payments. Bishops and abbots were landlords with large estates and thus made a double demand on the income of the tillers of the soil. Lastly came the extra burden of the *taille* to supply the military needs of the monarch. Upon the accession of Charles VIII in 1470 the peasants described their hard lot to the States General in these words :—

"During the past thirty-four years troops have been ever passing through France and living on the poor people. When the poor man has managed by the sale of the coat on his back, after hard toil, to pay his taille, and hopes he may live out the year on the little he has left, then come fresh troops to his cottage, eating him up. In Normandy multitudes have died of hunger. From want of beasts men and women have to yoke themselves to the carts, and others, fearing that if seen in the daytime they will be seized for not having paid their taille, are compelled to work at night. The king should have pity on his poor people, and relieve them from the said tailles and charges."

157. *Peasant Revolts in Spain*

Spain, like all the other countries, was afflicted with peasant revolts. In one instance a Spanish lord engaged the services of Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim to quell such an uprising because of his supposed magical powers. Juan de Valdes, brother of the secretary of the Emperor Charles V, complained : "I see that we can scarcely get anything from Christ's ministers but for money ; at baptism money, at bishoping money, at marriage money, for confession money—no, not extreme unction, without money! They will ring no bells without money, no burial in the church without money; so that it seemeth that Paradise is shut up from them that have no money. The rich are buried in the church, the poor in the churchyard. The rich man may marry with his nearest kin, but the poor not so, albeit he be ready to die for love of her. The rich may eat flesh in Lent, but the poor may not, albeit fish perhaps be much dearer. The rich man may readily get large indulgences, but the poor none, because he wanteth money to pay for them." [1]

158. *Outbreaks in Germany and Adjacent Countries*

In German states and border lands peasant risings, both successful and unsuccessful, occurred from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century. It seems strange that the revolutionary spirit manifested itself, not where the evils of feudal serfdom bore most heavily upon the people, but where some relief had already come to inspire the partially freed serfs with the hope of a completer emancipation.

While the most of these social and economic revolutions were connected in one way or another with the peasant class, nevertheless it would be an error to describe all of them as attacks of the serfs against their feudal lords. Perhaps it would be more correct to characterize them as insurrections of the poor against the rich, of debtors against creditors, of those without the pale of legal protection against those safeguarded in their rights by the prevailing law, of the unprivileged against the privileged classes. Fundamentally the purpose was not so much the disruption of feudal relationships as it was the readjustment of standards of living. In the majority of cases the peasantry of the rural regions began the outbreaks and were then joined by the poor men of the towns; and in other instances the city men rebelled first and were joined afterwards by the country folk. Indeed in some cases these economic alliances even surmounted the barriers of class distinctions and led the poorer nobles to either secretly sympathize with the lower classes or to openly join them in attacks on the wealthier nobility. In Bohemia, for example, the lower nobles led the insurgent peasants and townspeople to one success after another against the imperial forces.[1]

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[1] Quoted in Seebohm, *Prot. Rev.*, 60.

Not only were these revolts social and economic, but they were ecclesiastical as well. One common, dominant note of hatred against the officials of the Medieval Church persists and grows in intensity and volume throughout all these movements. This hostility was manifestly anti-clerical, however, not anti-religious. The Jews were denounced for their sharp business bargaining and usurious practices. The priests were assailed because they were the tools employed by the Church for galling financial exactions which the people so keenly felt. The tithes great and small touched every peasant's income and the means taken to collect them were most offensive. From the fourteenth century onward the stream of anti-clerical literature increased in volume and bitterness. The monk had become the object of hatred and scorn among laymen high and low, and the regular clergy did not fare much better in the minds of the masses of the people. But the most intense hostility was reserved for the higher clergy, who were regarded as the chief blood-suckers of the German people in the interest of Rome through the numerous financial devices instituted to drain the country of its resources. The major portion of the tithes, as a matter of fact, although extorted in the name of the Church, did not go into the pockets of the clergy, but enriched the feudal lords. Popular imagination is not very discriminative, it must be confessed, hence feudal and clerical dues were denounced as belonging to the same scheme of unfair robbery.[2]

Another interesting fact is revealed in these insurrections, namely, that notwithstanding the hatred of the priests nearly every movement was characterized by some type of religious enthusiasm which dogmatically asserted that if only the tyrannical priesthood could be destroyed, then God's true kingdom might be established on earth. No doubt the chief roots of this belief ran back into the Lollard movement in England and into the Hussite movement in Bohemia, but after 1476 it came to have a distinctly German character as is clearly shown in the various revolutionary programmes,[3] which sought to establish a popular religion absolutely divorced from the control of any sort of priestly hierarchy.

[1] Lindsay, *Hist. of the Ref.*, i, 95–7.
[2] Bax, *The Peasants War*, 11.
[3] Lindsay, 97.

In 1391 at Gotha occurred one of the earliest of these popular outbreaks when the peasantry and the burghers instituted a riot against the Jews and demanded their expulsion on the ground of their financial exactions. This was clearly the revolt of debtors against usurers. In the end it was suppressed by the better elements of the citizens of Gotha.[1] For a century following that uprising, similar movements occurred in various parts of Germany against the oppressions of Jews, nobles, and priests. In their marching songs the peasants called upon Christ to keep them from killing the priests. They demanded that the monks and priests distribute their lands among the people and that the Church lands be secularized.[2] "This is the true Evangel," cried the peasants of Schwaben, "the old priests have preached falsely and should all be killed." "Christian freedom" was a common watchword.[3]

The Hussite Wars (1415–1436)[4] aimed at the establishment of both a State and a Church on a nationalistic basis. Consequently they were an attack upon the prerogatives of the Papacy and some of the cardinal doctrines of the Medieval Church, on the one hand, and a defiance of the imperial power on the other. This intense popular movement inaugurated many social changes in the relations of men. Echoes of the revolt spread far and wide throughout Central Europe during the latter half of the fifteenth century and opened the eyes of men to new things. Ziska had bequeathed his skin to make a drum-head and the beating of that drum was heard for years throughout Bohemia and Moravia and Central Europe. Disciples of the movement settled in different countries and became centres of propaganda. Paul Crawar was sent to Scotland, and others as zealous as he to East Prussia, the Netherlands, and even Spain. The peasants eagerly accepted their teaching that Christian tithes were originally free-will offerings and that the Old Testament law was not binding, and hence that the compulsory tithes were unconstitutional. This conviction about the tithes appeared in most of the reform programmes of the peasants thereafter. The victories of the Bohemian peasants led by the lower nobility over the imperial forces inspired the masses of the people outside of Bohemia in the German states with a new confidence in their own power and new plans for securing their rights by force. The chroniclers clearly reveal the fear of the governing classes resulting from this manifestation of class consciousness.[1] Furthermore the treaty of Basel in some sense recognized, or at least tolerated, the doctrines of the Hussites.

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[1] Lindsay 98.

[2] Ficher, 107.

[3] Müller, *Kirchengesch.*, ii, 196; Steinhausen, 447.

[4] For a fuller account of the Hussite Wars see chap. xvi.

The first successful peasants' revolt occurred in Switzerland, where the people had long been free peasants in the Empire. When the imperial power was used to help their lords against them, they threw off the yoke of the Empire. In 1315 the three forest cantons joined in common cause against their Austrian feudal lords and, aided by their beloved Alps, in the memorable battle of Morgarten, where 1,300 Swiss peasants defeated 10,000 Austrians, gained their freedom. Soon thereafter other neighbouring cantons joined them to form a new nation—the Swiss Confederation. Their flag, a red background with a white cross in the centre, with its motto: "Each for all, and all for each," became an emblem of hope to all the oppressed in Europe.[2]

In conscious imitation of the successful Swiss rebellion, the peasants of the Rhaetian Alps, insulted and oppressed by their feudal lords, formed the Graubund. During the fifty years following 1424 one wave of insurrection followed another until finally they too gained their independence and established a little republic.

The victorious example of these two peasant republics inflamed the imagination of the German peasants of the entire south-western part of the Empire and incited them to popular outbreaks. They felt themselves subjected to a double bondage: to the feudal lord and to the priest. Often the latter was the harsher tyrant because he demanded the regular tithes and in addition pay for every service. Thus that religion which should have been his help, his comfort, his sympathizer, was too often a system of unjust extortion.

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[1] Lindsay, 98.

[2] These free peasants did not really secede from the Empire till 1499, and indeed were formally connected with it until 1648, with the Emperor as their overlord. But they were his free peasants with power to form leagues for the mutual defence of their rights.

To make matters still worse the higher clergy were also feudal lords who rigidly exacted their dues and services from the sullen peasants. In general, therefore, the peasants demanded a correction of ecclesiastical abuses, a modification of their political grievances and the abolition of social and economic injustice.

The next rebellion broke out in Franconia in 1476. Its John the Baptist was Hans Boheim who came from Niklashausen near Würzburg. He was accustomed to play the fife and beat the drum at local festivities in the villages along the Tauber. In 1476 he was seized with the inspiration to preach salvation from their sins to his neighbours. He gave up his own sinful life, turned prophet, and professed to have had visions of the Virgin Mary who commanded him to proclaim that the kingdom of God was at hand, that the yoke of bondage to lords spiritual and temporal was about to end, and that under the new kingdom there would be no taxes, tithes, or dues. All would be brethren, and woods, pastures and waters would be free to all men. He urged the people to forsake their old ways of life as he had done, to put aside their personal adornments and dress in humble attire, and to make pilgrimages to Niklashausen to worship the Virgin. As he continued to preach that henceforth there would be neither Emperor, Pope, prince, nor any authority lay or spiritual, a great social unrest ensued. For several months the estates of the lords, bishops, and abbots were deserted and the masses to the number of 40,000 streamed to Niklashausen, and all greeted each other as " brother " and " sister ". Boheim was proclaimed as the Messiah, the people dropped on their knees before him, and portions of his clothing were carried away as relics.

The clergy of the region became alarmed at the strange commotion and denounced Boheim as a sorcerer and agent of the devil. The Bishops of Mainz and Nuremberg forbade their villeins, under heavy penalties, from making pilgrimages to Niklashausen.

Finally Boheim invited men only to appear on a certain day and with weapons. The Bishop of Würzburg sent a guard of thirty-four armed men to Niklashausen to seize Boheim. He was captured and taken back to Würzburg a prisoner. This created a great commotion among the 34,000 peasants assembled at Niklashausen and 16,000 of them attempted a rescue, but were treacherously treated by the bishop. The prophet was burned as a heretic and his ashes were thrown into the river Main. The uprising was then suppressed, but the teachings of Boheim were not lost. On the contrary they found a ready response in the hearts of the peasants, who yearned for freedom from bondage to their feudal and spiritual lords, and the restoration of those rights which in the olden days had belonged to the community.

Next occurred a series of uprisings of the peasants under the emblem of the Bundschuh, or peasant's clog. The first outbreak was the culmination in 1492 of a conflict, which had begun as early as 1423, between the Abbot of Kempen and his peasants. The rebellion was occasioned by the new demands of the abbot, unsanctioned by ancient custom, by which the peasants were oppressed and plundered. Free peasants were converted into serfs by forged documents. Upon the death of a peasant the abbot seized the best horse and also the stock of wine. As a result the peasants attacked the monastery and forced the abbot to withdraw for safety to the castle of Leibenthaun. The Emperor interfered and the revolt was crushed. Many of the leaders were forced to flee for safety to Switzerland.

The second Bundschuh rising was in Alsace in 1493 when the peasants found warm allies in the burghers of the towns and feudatories of the Bishop of Strassburg, who had their own grievances. "Down with the powerful and plunder the rich" was the cry of the demagogues who appealed to the artisans who were numerous but poor. Famine added to the bitterness of class hatred and real and fancied wrongs. Jacob Wimpfeling was the leader. Secret meetings were held at which an organization was formed to free the peasants and to reform the Church by limiting the clergy to one benefice, by abolishing all tithes and dues and by dissolving ecclesiastical courts. The first step in the insurrection was to seize the town of Schlettstadt and plunder its monastery. Then, all men in Alsace were called upon to join them, the Bundschuh banner was to be unfurled, and one town after another was to be taken. The plans of the insurgents were betrayed, however, and armed knights scoured the country seizing all suspects who were tried, tortured, quartered alive, or hung. Many fugitives fled to Switzerland to await another opportunity.

The third uprising took place in 1501 among the peasants who lived near Kempten and caught the infection from the outbreak of 1492. They too were put down with a strong arm by the authorities. In the outbreak at Untergrambach in 1502 the flag had on it a kneeling peasant with a picture of a cross and the inscription "Nichts dem die Gerechtigkeit Gottes".

The fourth manifestation, caused by the tyranny and extravagance of the overlords, occurred again in Alsace in 1502 in the regions about Speyer and the Necker, close to Franconia. Although it centred in the mark of Untergrünbach, it spread until it included all the sections of the upper and middle Rhine. The Bundschuh was raised as the emblem of freedom, a Bundschuh League was formed, which included 7,000 men and 400 women among the peasants and villagers, and an effort was made to arouse all Germany to join the League. Able leaders appeared and the insurgents declared that they were determined to win their liberty with arms in imitation of the brave Swiss.

"We have joined ourselves together," they asserted, "in order that we may be free. We shall free ourselves with arms in our hands, for we would be like the Swiss. We will root out and abolish all authorities and lordships from the land, and march against them with the force of our host and with well-armed hand under our banner. And all who do not honour and acknowledge us shall be killed. The princes and nobles, broken and done with, we will storm the clergy in their foundations and abbeys. We will overpower them, and hunt out and kill all priests and monks together." Thus they were determined to recognize no political superior but the Emperor. Their programme included the appropriation of all the property of the clergy and the nobles, the abolition of all feudal dues and ecclesiastical fees, and the resumption of communism in lands, forests and rivers.

In vindication of the righteousness of their cause they appealed to religion and inscribed on their flag the motto: "Only what is just before God." For their password they took the significant ditty :—

"Well, now ! How doth it fare ?
Of priests and nobles we've enough and to spare !"

As a matter of caution rather than principle, they forbade their members to go to confession. But a member with an over sensitive conscience in confession revealed the secret to his priest and he in turn informed the bishop who communicated the information to the nobles.

The bishops and nobles immediately organized and Emperor Maximillian brutally ordered their property to be confiscated, their wives and children banished, and themselves quartered alive. Barbarous persecutions, inhuman punishments, and confiscations occurred, but the nobles soon realized that such procedure would be suicidal, since it would rob them of their tenants, hence the cruel orders were not fully executed. Meanwhile hundreds of the ringleaders fled to Switzerland, or the Black Forest, and the rest of the rebels returned to their old servitude to await a more favourable opportunity.

The Bundschuh banner was furled and hidden away, but only for a brief time, because for the fifth time in 1512 and 1513 it was brought forth, this time on the east side of the Rhine in the Black Forest and near Würtemberg. The leader of this movement was Joss Fritz, a handsome man of superior manners and neat attire, an eloquent soldier, accustomed to battle, inured to hardships, and of natural leadership. Implicated in former revolts in 1502, he had escaped being " quartered " by fleeing to Switzerland. For years he hid himself in places where he was unknown, but never despaired. In 1512 he returned to Freiburg, where secretly and with great skill for organization, he began to renew the peasants' league for a fresh revolt. His appointment as forester under a nearby lord, gave him an opportunity to arouse the peasants in the fields, or at inns, and fairs, and to hold secret meetings under the cover of darkness in lonely places. On these occasions he incited the peasants by pointing out their burdens, by denouncing the wealth of their lay and ecclesiastical oppressors, who robbed them of the wild game in the forests and the fish in the streams which, like the air and the sun, God had intended should be free to all men, and who spilled their blood in petty feudal quarrels. He told them that they ought to have no masters but God, the Pope, and the Emperor. Finally he explained the Bundschuh to them and sent them off to consult their priest whose approbation Joss had already secured. Encouraged by their spiritual guide, the peasants formulated their articles, which Joss defended from the Bible.

It was decided first to attempt to secure the approbation of the Emperor and if he refused to aid them, then they would turn to the Swiss.

The articles of association, which were drawn up after many sessions, demanded the abolition of feudal dues and powers; the replacement of ecclesiastical courts by the old village councils; the limitation of the clergy to one benefice; the curtailment of the property foundations of monastic and collegiate foundations; the abolition of all interest on debts; free hunting, fishing, woods, and pastures for all; and the recognition of the authority of God, Pope, and Emperor alone.

Local circles with responsible heads were organized and the leaders frequently conferred. Joss and Staffel supervised all proceedings through a committee appointed to perfect the plans. The movement extended as far as Cologne to the north, but was particularly strong in Breisgau, Alsace, and Swabia. Missionaries were sent out to spread the cause.

To gain information Joss took into his confidence a sort of guild of licensed beggars, with elected captains, whose members, as they went about soliciting alms, acted as spies and kept the various groups of peasants informed of the movement. At length the conspiracy was completed and nothing was lacking except the Bundschuh banner. A blue silk banner with a white cross—the Swiss emblem—was made, but who could be secured to paint the Bundschuh on it? Twice Joss tried to secure a painter who would not betray the project, but failed and was almost betrayed. At last far off on the banks of the Necker he found a trustworthy artist who painted upon the banner the Virgin, St John, the Pope, the Emperor, a peasant kneeling before the cross, and the Bundschuh with the motto "O Lord, help the righteous" below it. With the precious banner hidden beneath his clothing he started home, but before he arrived, the secret was revealed and the cause betrayed. Thousands of peasants were armed and ready to march against their lords, but the project was doomed to failure and Joss was forced to flee for his life with his banner to Switzerland. The leaders seized were put to torture, hung, beheaded, and some of them were quartered alive. The popular hero was not disheartened, however, but bided his time and somewhat later returned to the Black Forest where he once more carried on his propaganda. He probably died in the Peasants' War in 1525.

As a result of the abortive uprisings in Lehen and inspired by the movement led by Joss Fritz, the " poor Conrads " broke out in rebellion in 1513 in Würtemberg on the estate of Duke Ulrich, who had levied new and objectionable exactions to pay his debts. The townspeople were also aroused at the income tax demanded without the consent of the estates and the imposts on the consumption of meal and wine. The butchers, millers, and vinters were allowed to falsify their weights and measures on condition that their profits might go, in large part, to the duke. Following the methods of the Bundschuh, the peasants and burghers held secret meetings, had their own passwords, and prepared for a surprise uprising. They demanded the removal of these abuses, free hunting, fishing, and wood, and the abolition of villein service. The outbreak was nipped in the bud, however, and the knights of Duke Ulrich defeated the rebels and the Duke induced them to lay down their arms by treacherous promises. The revolt was a flash in the pan. Many of the leaders fled the country—mostly to Switzerland.

The year 1513 also witnessed the insurrection of the Kurucks in Hungary. Cardinal Bocrocz came from Rome with a bull for a crusade against the Turks, which urged the serfs and all to join the movement which was extremely popular. The peasants armed themselves as if intending to enter the crusade against the infidels, then turned their weapons against the nobles. A terrible onslaught ensued under the leadership of a peasant leader named Dosza, one of the Szeklers of Transylvania. Finally the peasants were beaten in the battle of Temesvar and Dosza was captured, seated on a throne of fire, and decorated with a red-hot crown. Dosza and his followers wanted a complete reorganization of the political, social, and religious institutions. They issued a decree abolishing the king, nobility, and bishops, and proclaimed the equality of all men before God. Defeated after a terrible struggle, 60,000 peasants perished in war and the subsequent reprisals, and a more brutal and oppressive rule than ever followed.[1]

The same year there occurred in Switzerland a minor revolt of the peasants who complained that because of the increase in luxuries, the adoption of foreign styles and fineries, and the spread of the mania for gambling, their lot had become harder. Apparently the only result occurred in the canton of Berne where their condition was noticeably improved as a result of the agitation.

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[1] Leger, *Hist. of Austro-Hungary*, ch. 15.

The year saw two distinct uprisings—one in Baden and the other in Carinthia. Both were the reverberations of previous movements. To the usual programme of reforms the peasants of Baden added the abolition of the payment of rents and interest. No lord in the land, lay or clerical, save the Emperor was to be recognized. The instigators planned to surprise and take the towns of Weissenburg and Hagenau and get rid of all imperial councillors and judges as well as knights and nobles. But the result was the same old story—discovery and suppression. In Carinthia the revolt was occasioned by increased taxes, new imposts for war, unendurable oppression by the nobles, and the refusal of the Emperor Frederick III to don a peasant's garb in an old and revered ceremony.[1] It is estimated that 90,000 peasants joined in the outbreaks in which many castles were attacked and burned, and the nobles and bishops slain. The rebellions in Krain and Styria were long and bloody, but in the end they were suppressed. The Emperor promised reforms and some changes were made, but the peasants were subjected to a perpetual tax.

To defend themselves against the rebellion of their subjects, the nobles to the whole region north of Switzerland organized the defensive Swabian League and issued this proclamation: "Since in the land of Swabia, and all over the Empire, among the vassals and poor people disturbances and insurrections are taking place, with setting up the standard of the Bundschuh and other ensigns against the authority of their natural lords and rulers, with a view to the destruction of the nobles and all honourable persons, the noble and knightly orders have therefore agreed, whatever shall happen, to support each other against every attempt on the part of the common man."[2]

159. *General Conclusions*

A careful inspection of the various religious revolts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries reveals the significant fact that both in their causes and in their progress they were largely economic, social, and political. The ever-increasing exactions of the ecclesiastical hierarchy produced a common hatred and sense of injustice in the civic rulers, the lower nobility, the burghers, and the peasants and labourers. It is a matter of no surprise, therefore, to discover that the sudden increase in the sale of indulgences, like the last straw, broke down the whole system. Evidently any other incident might have produced the same result. The train of powder was laid for the explosion. The match to light it and produce the explosion might have been any one of a hundred kinds.

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[1] Bax, 83.

[2] Quoted in Seebohm, *Prot. Rev.*, 66.

A general survey of the unrest and discontent in Europe among the peasants and villagers from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century leads to the following conclusions :—

1. While uprisings and disturbances occurred in every European land, they were most intense and widespread in Germany and the countries bordering on Germany.

2. The causes of this seething discontent were fundamentally economic and ecclesiastical although also social and political.

3. Where strongly organized national states had been created, as in England, France and Spain, royal authority was strong enough either to protect the common people or to suppress their uprisings. On the other hand in countries where no compactly organized state existed, like Germany and Italy, the peasantry and burghers appealing in vain to efficient kingly power to safeguard them from oppression at the hands of the feudal lords conspired for a general rebellion to maintain their rights. It is not surprising to find the peasants debating whether to paint on the flag of the Bundschuh the eagle of the Empire or the white cross of the Swiss republic, nor to see the nobles, bishops, and knights uniting their swords to crush the outbreaks of "the common man". The crying need of both was a strong central power to hold the balance of justice between them and to settle their disputes by law for the common weal.

4. The fiercest insurrections occurred, not in the regions where serfdom was most hopeless, but near the sections where serfdom had obtained the least hold, or had passed away entirely, where the traditions of ancient freedom were still alive, where the spirit of the people was least subdued, and where the Swiss mountaineers had won self-government. Nor were the various rebellions isolated phenomena, but parts

of one great tide of advancing modern civilization, which had already won a measure of freedom for the peasants of England, France and Switzerland.

5. As a whole the results were a sad disappointment to the peasants for they were everywhere defeated. Nevertheless their lot was bettered in some places, although their condition was worse in Germany.

6. In most of the later instances the burghers joined the peasants and thus presented a solidarity of interest in the united attack upon the protected privileges of the strongly entrenched aristocratic classes.

7. These outbursts show that a very large proportion of the laity had ceased to look to the Church and its leaders for guidance in bettering their social, economic, political, and even religious conditions; but fell back upon their own strength. This activity of the laity independent of the clergy was strongly prophetic of the new period of civilization ahead.

It may be accepted as an established historical fact that certain ideas and the superiority of certain social classes persist only so long as they continue to render service to society. During the Middle Ages, for example, the clergy and the feudal lords controlled the whole social life, and regulated the intellectual and political conditions because priests and monks were the only educated classes and the feudal aristocracy were the only skilled fighters. After the crusades, however, these privileged orders were seriously shaken and at last completely and helplessly overthrown by forces that were revolutionizing society. In the first place what we comprehend in the terms culture, learning, and education ceased to be a monopoly in the hands of the clergy, and passed over to the laity. The Renaissance in the Latin countries, to a very considerable degree, was pagan, or at least non-Christian, while in the Teutonic countries it was intensely nationalistic and hence hostile to the arbitrary and half-mystical Medieval Church. In the second place the prowess of the English yeoman at Crécy and Agincourt, the rise of the Flemish and French communes, the organization of the Swabian League, the heroism of the Swiss peasants and the victories of the Hussites broke the prestige of the feudal nobility and proved that no feudal cavalry could withstand well-disciplined and well-armed infantry. Furthermore the invention of gunpowder and the match lock gun and the use of artillery demonstrated the fact that the common man with these weapons was more than a match for a knight with a horse, coat of mail, and lance. Hence feudal chivalry was giving way to mercenary troops or militia, like the *condottieri* in Italy, the "Free Companions" of France, and the *landsknecht* regiments of Germany. Power was passing out of the hands of the nobles into the hands of those who had the stronger arm. Princes with large possessions and kings employed mercenary troops and thus gained the mastery in Germany, France, and England. Furthermore these rulers selected their advisers not from the clergy, but from the jurists and humanists, who were recruited largely from the middle or burgher class. When this transference of political power is kept in mind, it is not surprising that in the conflicts between the old Church and the national states the latter quite generally won. Nor was it strange that the common people should regard the victory of their secular rulers as their own triumph as a class. Consequently the ground was so prepared that in the religious revolts of the sixteenth century, wherever the rulers and the people united to combat the Roman Church, the Reformation was a success, as in Germany, England, Switzerland, and elsewhere. In other countries, like France and Spain, where the rulers were allies of the Pope, the revolution failed.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Economic and Industrial System

160. *The Guild System*

The guilds of the Middle Ages had a more vital relationship with the old Church than is commonly supposed. As voluntary associations for the mutual aid and protection of their members, they were imbued with a strong spirit of Christian fraternity and co-operation. They were divided into three classes: benevolent, merchant, and craft guilds, but all had a religious character although the primary purpose of the last two was secular and economic. The Christian Church in preaching the brotherhood of man encouraged the early development of guilds as the natural expression of the spirit of association inherent in society. The guilds were first mentioned in the Carolingian capitularies of 779, 789, 804, 821, and 884, and in the ecclesiastical enactments of Hincmar of Rheims in 852.[1] Guild fraternities were referred to in the second half of the ninth century in England and the statutes of the fraternities of Cambridge, Abbotsbury, and Exeter in the first half of the eleventh century form the oldest body of guild ordinances extant in Europe. The guilds of Norway were first mentioned in the eleventh century, those of Denmark in the twelfth, and those of Sweden in the fourteenth. From the thirteenth century onward these religious fraternities, or guilds, flourished on the Continent and especially in England.

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[1] Knowledge of the early Frankish guilds is obtained from the imperial laws and ecclesiastical ordinances of the eighth and ninth centuries. In the capitulary of Charles the Great, Heristall, 779, c. 16, guilds as sworn societies were forbidden. Boretius, *Capitularia regum Francorum*, 51. The capitulary of Aachen, 789, c. 26, forbade guilds to take the name of St Stephen, the king or his sons. Hegel, *Städte und Gilden*, i, 2. Ecclesiastical law kept a sharp eye on these guilds. See action of synod of Nantes, Hartwig, 135, and action or Archb. Hincmar, Harduin, VI, i, 460; Mansi, xviii, 166; Migne, vol. 125, 777. The societies organized for spiritual aid and pious works were encouraged by the Church, Hegel, 2–4. Hegel shows that the guild was the union of two elements; heathenish and Christian, 5. He gives an excellent discussion of the guilds in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Normandy, Flanders, Holland, and Germany.

In 1388 the English Parliament ordered every sheriff to have the wardens and masters of all guilds and brotherhoods to return to the king's council in chancery full information about their foundation, laws, and property. These documents show that each member of a guild took an oath of admission, paid an entrance fee, and made a small annual contribution to the common fund. The brethren were aided in case of sickness, poverty, injury, and old age, and frequently in the event of loss by robbery, shipwreck, and fire. Alms were also given to the poor who were not members. Candles were supported at various altars; feasts and processions were held periodically; the funerals of members were attended; and masses for the dead were provided for out of the common fund. Some of these religious guilds supported schools, others repaired roads, bridges, and town walls. In this way they came to exercise a decided influence on town government. These religious societies played a conspicuous rôle in the social and religious life of England, especially in charitable institutions, down to the time of their suppression in 1547.[1]

Medieval men were fond of all sorts of societies and organizations. Many religious and philanthropic brotherhoods were formed.[2] Each one had its own patron saint and frequently a special chapel in which the saint's day was celebrated with appropriate religious services. Banquets and festal meetings were frequent. Members assisted each other in case of need. The baptisms, marriages, and funerals in families of the members were always attended by all the members. Money was appropriated by the society to pay for the masses for the souls of the dead. Not only did these organizations play an important part in the civic life of the period, but also in the ecclesiastical politics of the day.

The Medieval Church encouraged these brotherhoods among the laity for religious, economic, and social purposes. The Brotherhood of St Leonard at Basel was recognized by Pope Innocent II and given the right of conducting burials in 1139 and the privilege was renewed in 1218. These societies for mutual welfare supported the weak and sick, helped the poor, and emphasized the rights of individuals and the advantages of union.[1]

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[1] *Encyc. Brit.*, xii, 14–15.

[2] Le Compagnonnage in France was an illegal secret society, somewhat like Freemasonry, with a limited membership of masters. Lavisse and Rambaud, iii, 301. In Frankfurt the tailors and stone masons were organized in brotherhoods in 1452. Kriegh, i, 178–80, Geering, 16.

The merchant guild was in all probability an adaptation of the principle and organization of the religious guild for purposes of trade. This type of guild was first mentioned on the Continent in the eleventh century and it was transplanted from Normandy to England, as a result of the increasing importance of trade, where after the reign of King John it spread rapidly among the boroughs. The large towns like London, Colchester, Norwich, and the Cinque Ports did not adopt it. The townsmen jealously guarded the merchant guild as one of their most important privileges because it gave them a trade monopoly and enabled them to enact laws against foreign merchants and non-guildmen. These ordinances for protection against outside traders were enforced by an alderman with the assistance of several deputies, or by one or two masters, wardens, or keepers. During the period of general markets or fairs outsiders were permitted to sell their wares and considerable liberty was given to wholesalers at all times. At regular periodical meetings the brethren feasted, revised their ordinances, elected officers, and transacted other business.

The merchant guild and the borough, and the guildmen and the burgesses were not identical, but were distinct in most towns throughout the Middle Ages. Admission to the guild was not restricted to the burgesses, nor did the guildmen form an aristocracy in control of the municipal government. All that can be said is that the guild merchants formed an official department of the municipal administration and in this way exerted great influence over the economic and corporative development of the English towns. Artisans, who bought raw material and sold a finished product, were admitted to many of the merchant guilds. The merchants guild did not create the craft guild and delegate its authority to it, nor indeed did there exist a close organic unity between them. Doubtless many artisans belonged to both guilds, and because the merchant guild was so powerful in the municipality it may have exercised some sort of indirect supervision over the craftsmen and their guilds. With the creation of each new craft guild, however, with a monopoly over the work and trade of a special branch of industry, the merchant guild was weakened and its sphere of activity lessened. Just in proportion as a town prospered economically the craft guilds multiplied and even the merchants formed separate unions so that the merchant guild lost its vitality and power incident to trade monopoly and hence began to decline. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries economic forces were gradually disintegrating the merchant guilds and transferring their authority to the craft guilds. So far as they survived in England after the fifteenth century it was merely as a religious fraternity, or as a periodic feast, or as a vague term applied to the entire municipal corporation. On the Continent the merchant guild played a less important rôle than in England. In the town charters and municipal governments of Germany, France, and the Netherlands it occupied a less important place.[1]

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[1] Geering, 16–17. The brotherhoods were called Zünfte and at Basel were first used in a technical sense by the tailors in 1260.

The merchant guild was a sort of chamber of commerce composed of the business men of a town for mutual support and protection. Since such an organization added to the town's prosperity, the lord readily granted the members certain privileges. The members, in turn, paid him definite sums from their business profits in lieu of former personal service. These merchant guilds also secured from foreign rulers and city authorities trading privileges and thus established branch houses abroad, where they frequently banded together in one large association to cope with the native merchants. For instance, the German merchants had such an association in London, which was given a guild-house in 1474 by the King of England, where the merchants lived. Similar organizations were formed in Bergen (Norway), Novgorod (Russia), Wisby (in Scandinavia), and Bruges (Netherlands).

The foreign trade of Hamburg increased from 205,920 Lübeck marks in 1362 to 336,000 in 1400; that of Lübeck from 125,280 marks in 1362 to 293,760 in 1384; and that of Rostock from 16,224 marks in 1362 to 122,240 in 1384.[2]

The merchant classes of Europe were as well organized in guilds as the artisans. They not only sought the moral and religious well-being of their members, but also aimed at securing commercial advantages through a monopoly of some particular trade in a country, or the monopoly of some special class of goods.

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[1] *Encyc. Brit.*, xii, 14–15.

[2] Inama-Sternegg, *Wirtschrftsgesch.*, iii, 521.

The craft guilds grew out of the associative tendencies and social and economic conditions of the Middle Ages. A particular craft guild ordinarily comprised all the artisans in a single branch of industry in a single town. These societies did not appear distinctly either on the Continent or in England until the early part of the twelfth century. With the growth of trade and industry the number of artisans increased and they began to organize for mutual protection and assistance. With the pronounced economic expansion of the thirteenth century the craft guilds rapidly multiplied until by the fourteenth century every branch of industry in every town had its own particular guild and these craft guilds were in a very flourishing condition all over Europe. Like the religious institutions of that day, such as monasticism, the craft guilds in organization and purposes were the same throughout Western Europe. The officers were elected by the members to supervise the quality of the wares produced and to inspire honest, skilled, and efficient workmanship.[1] Hence rules were enacted to govern admission to membership, apprenticeship, hours of labour, fees and dues, and common religious observances, festivities and pageants, education and recreation. The economic aims of the guilds, however, were always paramount to the social and religious.

With the ascendancy of the craft guilds in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and the consequent decline of the merchant guilds, a pronounced social and political revolution took place in the towns of Europe. Incensed at the monopoly of political power by the patricians, at their bad management of finances, at their partisan administration of justice, and at their deeds of violence, the artisans in numerous instances threw off the tyrannical yoke of the patrician government, won greater independence in the management of their own affairs, and secured the right to participate in the municipal government. So complete was the victory in some towns that the artisans secured a revision of the municipal constitution with the craft fraternities as a basis. This was particularly true in Germany before the Reformation. Nuremberg was a notable exception, however, for there the patricians retained their control.[1] The conflict between the burghers and the nobility produced many civil wars. The guilds were organized as military companies, and some of the cities like Strassburg and Augsburg could put 40,000 troops in the field. To safeguard commerce, leagues like the Hanseatic and those of South Germany were formed. In England, however, where the boroughs were largely democratic until the fifteenth century, although there were many conflicts between the rich and the poor, the craft guilds as such took no organized part but remained subordinate to the town governments which tended to become oligarchies.

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[1] At Breman badly-made shoes were burned at the public pillory.

In the fourteenth century two new kinds of craft fraternities, namely the merchants' and the journeymen's companies, began to appear.[2] The old merchant guilds included both merchants and artisans and monopolized all the trade of the town, while the new merchants' societies were rigidly restricted to dealers who sold one or more kinds of wares produced by others and thus formed one class of craft guilds. In the fourteenth century the journeymen, in order to secure better hours of labour and higher wages, began to organize fraternities in defence of their rights against the master artisans. This new type of organization spread over Western Europe but was most pronounced in Germany where it formed one of the main features of the industrial life of the fifteenth century. In England the crafts of journeymen never gained complete independence but remained subordinate to the masters' guilds.[3]

In Germany where each city formed an independent and exclusive organization in control of all relations of life, the inhabitants were regarded as one large family whose moral and material welfare were carefully supervised by the municipal government. Hence each city in the early days regulated the production, distribution, and utilization of all provisions and manufactured articles, as well as prices and sales. Efforts were made to have each industry represented in the city even if foreign workmen had to be introduced. Care was taken, however, to encourage native industry by assuring to the local workers and tradespeople a monopoly of industrial trade and profits and by forcing the inhabitants to purchase from them exclusively. In this manner the civil authorities bestowed upon certain groups of workers trading rights as trusts "from God and the appointed authorities" and these various groups in turn organized themselves into guilds. The weavers of linen and woollen goods were the most numerous and most important. Towards the close of the fifteenth century Ulm was producing 200,000 pieces of linen annually. Augsburg in 1466 had 743 master-weavers and 40 dye houses. These weavers were subdivided into many different guilds on the basis of the kind of materials produced. "In many Westphalian towns," wrote Wimpfeling, "we find loom upon loom at work, and it is difficult to estimate how many thousand yards are made from month to month by the different guilds."[1] The dyers formed another important guild and, since leather and fur were used so extensively for dress, the guilds of tanners and furriers flourished. Closely associated with these two latter guilds were the shoemakers, tailors, glove-makers and stocking-knitters. The shoemakers in turn were subdivided into guilds making new shoes, those making slippers, and the cobblers. To supply provisions there were the guilds of bakers, butchers, fishmongers, gardeners, coopers, brewers, and wine porters. Even the innkeepers were divided into first and second class guilds. The metal workers were represented by the farriers, knife-makers, locksmiths, chain-forgers, nail makers, and armourers, who in turn were subdivided into helmet-makers, escutcheon-makers, harness-makers, harness-polishers, and so on. The gold, silver, bronze, and copper smiths, and the workers in stone and wood had their own guilds.[2]

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[1] Lindsay, 81.

[2] In the fifteenth century workmen's clubs were quite generally formed in the cities. They were patterned after the guilds, had their own officers and constitutions, and were controlled by the journeymen. They were found all over Europe. Jannsen, ii, 25.

[3] *Encyc. Brit.*, xii, 15–6.

So skilled were the German artisans that they had an international reputation. Felig Fabri of Ulm wrote in 1484: "When anyone wishes to have a first-rate piece of workmanship in bronze, stone, or wood he employs a German craftsman. I have seen German jewellers, goldsmiths, stonecutters, and carriage-makers do wonderful things among the Saracens; they surpass even the Greeks and Italians in art. Only last year the Sultan availed himself of the advice, knowledge, and labour of a German when he surrounded the harbour of Alexandria with a wall which is the wonder of the East." The Pope and Italian princes employed German bakers. The biscuits made by German bakers in the Venetian government bakeries were sold throughout the countries bordering on the Mediterranean and even in English and Dutch seaports. Paul Jovius, an Italian, stated that in his country German architects, sculptors, stone-cutters, copper engravers, mechanics, and engravers were commonly employed.[1]

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[1] Janssen, ii, 5.
[2] Ibid., 3–7.

Each town, socially and economically, was an independent exclusive association, having regard for the collective welfare. Hence production, distribution, use, and sale were regulated by law. In order to secure complete municipal independence, economically, each town sought to have every industrial trade and every branch of necessary production represented. To attain this ideal foreign artisans and tradesmen were usually called in to supplement local talent and ability. The artisans and traders of each community were given a monopoly of their wares, and consequently were guaranteed employment and fair wages. Trades and handicrafts became permanent property respected by all. The guilds were very jealous of the reputation of their products and of the good name of their members. Idleness and poverty were unknown, for all had to work, and hence an income was assured to all. Wages, hours of labour, and the amount of labour were regulated by law. Dishonesty was not tolerated, and those found guilty of it were heavily fined. Cities also sought to standardize the cost of living by buying and selling to the workmen, by a careful inspection of foods, by regulating sales and prices, and by forbidding overcharges.

Some conception of the number of guilds in the German cities may be gained from the following list: Frankfurt-on-Main had 14 in 1355 and 20 in 1387; Nuremberg 52 in 1363; Augsburg 17 in 1368; Hamburg 23 in 1376; Strassburg 29 in 1395; Cologne 51 in 1396; Heidelberg 10 in 1439 and Lübeck 51 in 1475.[2] The following table for Basel in 1429 is very illuminating concerning the importance of the guilds:—

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[1] Fischer, *Geschichte des deutschen Handels*, ii, 506.

[2] Inama-Sternegg, *Deutsche-Wirtschaftsgesch.*, iii, 2, p. 505.

Name of Guild.	*No. of members.*	*Property value, florins.*	*Average income, florins.*	*Rank.*[1]
Hohe Stube [2]	91	364,850	4,010	I.
Key Makers	78	113,070	1,450	II.
Hausgenossen [3]	56	56,540	1,010	III.
Safran [4]	181	10,595	678	IV.
Klein Basel	213	24,730	144	IV.
Winemakers	121	13,710	371	V.
Unincorporated	484	17,990	116	VI.
Gardners	159	36,555	120	VII.
Vine growers	213	25,570	50	VIII.
Bakers	70	52,455	365	IX.
Builders	219	43,715	324	X.
Leather dressers	193	14,725	259	XI.
Butchers	97	31,470	230	XII.
Weavers	93	10,220	246	XIII.
Smiths	172	50,000	305	XIV.
Fishermen	95	13,710	110	XV.
Saddlers	76	18,670	200	XVI.
Furriers [5]	123	?	?	
Totals	2,734	898,575		

The number of master butchers in Frankfurt in 1308 was 52, Nuremberg in 1362, 71; Hamburg in 1376, 57; Heidelberg, in 1439, 30. The number of master bakers in Frankfurt in 1363 was 75; Hamburg in 1376, 69; Heidelberg in 1439, 38. The master brewers numbered 181 in Frankfurt in 1376. The master tailors in Frankfurt in 1363 numbered 106; in Nuremberg in 1376, 28; in Heidelberg in 1349, 50.[6]

It must not be forgotten that the craft guilds accompanied and powerfully influenced the rise of town life. They appeared first in France and Italy, then in Germany and England. In 1300 Paris had 6,000 workers in the mechanical arts. In the fifteenth century Florence had 21 guilds; Hamburg 100, Cologne 80, and Lübeck 70. When comparing the guilds with our modern labour unions it must be done with caution, since the resemblance is a very slight one. In the guild were found both employer and employed, both capitalist and labourers, apprentices, journeymen, and master-workmen. The master was an employer of labour as well as a workman.

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[1] Significance of the rank is not clear.

[2] This appears to have been the name of some special guild. From Geering, 219.

[3] Meaning not clear.

[4] This appears to have been the name of some special guild.

[5] Further details for the furriers are wanting.

[6] Inama-Sternegg, iii, 521.

Unlike the modern employer, however, the master associated with him only a few workmen in his own house, and he worked with them.

In France the guild system was not universally adopted. It took little hold in Brittany and central France, and some of the large towns like Lyons, Bordeaux, and Narbonne in southern France had no guilds. In other parts of France guilds were pretty well established, although not all occupations in the towns were organized into guilds. In some towns the labourers were quite independent and not required to join guilds. The local government in not a few places regulated the crafts and guilds. The guild system in France had a twofold influence—positive and negative. On the one hand it rendered valuable service and justified its existence, because, in the first place, at least at the outset, it defended the workmen against the oppression of the feudal lords; it assured a living wage to its members in hard times through its monopoly of a certain branch of industry; it gave them the advantages of union and enabled them to obtain certain advantages; and it upheld high ideals of honest toil and cultivated pride in a good job. In the fifteenth century French industry had a high reputation throughout Western Europe and was commonly regarded as superior to the English.[1] On the other hand, the system prevented progress; condemned men of initiative and ingenuity to mediocrity; authorized a brutal exploitation of young men; and ended in the creation of a proletariat.

In the later Middle Ages labour conditions fluctuated as much as to-day, although hand labour was much more abundant. Labourers had fewer comforts and more cares than in our time. Food was not so plentiful, nor so nourishing. Less could be saved. The days of idleness (chamâges) were many, in fact very excessive, and had much to do in lowering the annual income. The days of obligatory fêtes constituted over six per cent of the working days, and the Church was careful to enforce the observance of these days. Consequently work averaged only five days a week.[2] In addition to the religious fêtes, the guilds had their own celebrations and picnics, and the towns had their special civic festive days.

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[1] Lavisse, iv$_2$, 140.

[2] Denifle, *Chartularium*, iv, No. 2702.

Loud and frequent were the complaints of the clergy and moralists of the period against the frequenting of the theatres, carousing, and drinking at the taverns, particularly evenings and Sundays, disputes and fighting, singing, immorality, and cursing.[1] It was pointed out that the indulgence by the men in these carousals meant misery and famine for the women and children at home for many days at a time. The fifteenth century was one of debauchery and coarseness.[2]

In France the Hundred Years War destroyed many of the guilds and corporations. Commerce was so interrupted that the cities had to fall back on local consumption. In 1416 at Chartres the bailiff proclaimed free trade and industry to relieve the misery of the people. The war had more effect on the remuneration of labour, than municipal tariffs and royal edicts.[3]

The craft guilds in Europe felt that they formed a distinct and powerful organization, like the clergy and the merchants. They recognized a common code of industrial law; observed a common form of etiquette in hospitality and travel; had their special celebrations; and talked of their common rights and privileges which they had to defend. In short there was scarcely a side of the artisan's life that was not controlled or at least powerfully influenced by these guilds. So well organized were the members that successful strikes for better food, higher pay, or shorter hours were waged. The bakers' guild of Colmar carried on a strike for ten years against the city authorities. In 1495 they left the city because their brotherhood had been insulted by other guilds in being refused their usual place in the Corpus Christi procession. The municipality declared them to be seditious and gave anyone permission to sell baker's products. Both parties appealed to the court of Oberbergheim, which fined the bakers but compelled the city to pay the costs of the trial. The bakers then appealed to the Royal Court, which confirmed the decision, and then the case was carried to the High Court of Justice of the Holy Roman Empire at Frankfurt. The bakers' guilds of the upper Rhine cities extended their sympathy and volunteered to mediate. Finally a council of mediation consisting of representatives of the city council of Colmar and delegates from the bakers' guilds of eight other cities, with Herr von Rappolstein selected as referee, decided in 1505 that the striking bakers should pay the city 166 florins after which they were to be reinstated in all their rights and restored to their position in the procession.[1] When the masters of the tinsmiths' guild in Nuremberg in 1475, because of the high cost of provisions, decided to reduce the fare of their assistants, the latter struck, left the city and proclaimed an effective boycot against the Nuremberg guild.[2] In Wesel in 1503 the journeymen tailors struck for higher wages and better food during the Whitsuntide festival, and resorted to violence, while the municipal authorities tried in vain to bring about a compromise.[3] The journeymen tailors of Mainz struck and left the city, whereupon they were expelled from the guild and a meeting of the league of tailors' guilds was called to adjust the situation. In 1505 the master tailors of 21 cities met at Oppenheim to consider "the interests of their trade and the best means of treating the workmen". It was decided to suppress Henry Ruffs of Worms who went from guild to guild stirring up strikes; to keep the funds of the guilds out of the hands of the journeymen so that they would have no means with which to strike; and to limit the fare of journeymen to one dish of meat at the evening meal, or roast meat twice a week, and to "a small half-jug" of wine daily.[4]

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[1] Nicolas de Clamanges wrote a trenchant tract " On the Necessity of Instituting no More New Fetes ".

[2] Lavisse, iv_2, 142.

[3] Lavisse, iv_2, 136, 140.

When the watermen on the Rhine struck for better board and higher wages, the shipmasters complained to the Margrave of Baden that the watermen "although receiving a florin a day, were not contented at their meals with a soup, a good vegetable, together with meat, bread and cheese, but demanded also a roast and dessert. This seems unreasonable. We cannot afford to give all this".

Since both the masters and the journeymen were so well organized, their numerous differences were usually settled by the mediation of trusted men in the city government, or by princes, or bishops. When the shoemakers of Emmerich struck in 1469, the city officials compromised the differences "after much discussion, through mutual concessions—much to the joy of masters and workers, who drank together and were as good friends as ever". Ten years later another revolt occurred, which was ended by the arbitration of the steward of the prince and the city council who arranged for the future settlement of differences and forbade strikes.[1]

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[1] Janssen, ii, 27–29.

[2] Ibid., 29.

[3] Ibid., 29–30.

[4] Ibid., 30–31.

The rise in Europe of a capitalist class and the organization of large trading companies, as well as the great discoveries and inventions, paralysed the guilds and destroyed their power. The guilds played into the hands of the capitalists. The poor were separated from the rich. A proletariat was created in the cities by the influx from the rural districts. Consequently a great hatred grew up between the rich burghers and the poor workmen which had reached the point of ugly and open rebellion by the sixteenth century. This hostility was also directed against the ruling class of the Church who, it was assumed, sided with the wealthy and powerful oppressors of the common people.

Among the effects of the rise of the guilds on the Church may be mentioned :—

1. The great care and honour bestowed upon handwork, much of which like the iron work, the wood carving, the stone cutting, leather work and jewellery was genuinely poetic and artistic, aided in the preparation of Europe for the Renaissance, and through that movement, for the Reformation.

2. The conflict incited by the guilds between the cities and the princes, led to the victory of the cities, which in turn became hostile to the higher clergy and opposed the financial measures of the Papacy.

3. The organization of guilds united the industrial population of the towns into a compact self-governing organization conscious of both its rights and its duties. Each member felt honour bound to defend the organization, took pride in his status in the community, felt that he was playing an honourable rôle, regarded the creation of a worthy piece of work as a religious duty, and was determined to resist every invasion of his rights. The guilds thus constituted a democratic force in Europe which resisted every encroachment whether by civil or ecclesiastical autocracy.

4. It was but natural that the power exercised by the guilds in the towns should lead them to play a political rôle.

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[1] Janssen, ii, 32.

Their members constituted the military defence and security of the towns, hence they came to demand and to receive a share in the town government, and in many instances the guild officers virtually ruled the towns. This power was further increased by the formation of leagues of these guild-controlled towns, which enabled them to oppose successfully the demands of the higher clergy. This new manifestation of hostility to ecclesiasticism was no small factor in the decline of the Medieval Church.

The economic conditions of Europe from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century were powerfully influenced by: (1) the decline of feudalism, (2) the rise of national states, (3) the appearance of free cities, (4) the discoveries and inventions, and (5) the Turkish conquests.

161. *European Trade*

Up to the sixteenth century trade in Europe underwent three distinct stages of development. In the first place it was local, with the town as the economic unit of production and distribution. Secondly, it broke over the local boundary lines and became national. Thirdly, it spread beyond national boundaries and became international. The transition, however, from medieval to modern trade came largely through the instrumentality of the national state. Although this was the general character of the evolution of trade, Germany was a conspicuous exception. There the old local ideas largely predominated. The municipalities conducted, directed, and controlled all commercial and industrial affairs.[1] By degrees the cities of Germany entered into offensive and defensive leagues to enforce peace, to secure justice, to adjust taxation, and coinage, and to assure exchange. Unions of cities for these purposes were formed in both northern and southern Germany. The most conspicuous outcome of these inter-city organizations was the Hanseatic League, which embraced most of the important German cities and included the foreign Hanses, or guilds. This League was a sort of mercantile state with its own government, its own code of laws, its own messenger service, its own coinage, and its own army and navy. Its power extended through branches from Russia and Norway to Scotland and Portugal. Under the jurisdiction of the League trade in all kinds of products and merchandise was carried on. The international character of the League's business is shown by the fact that its factories, warehouses, and agencies were located in London, Bruges, Bergen, Venice, and even Novgorod. The Fondaco dei Tedeschi at Venice was a powerful commercial institution. English merchants likewise established branch houses in foreign cities and did a lucrative business. Spanish and Italian cities also had mercantile establishments and factories in Mohammedan towns and countries like Tunis, Alexandria, Syria, and Morocco. The great fairs of the period were powerful stimulants to the growth of international trade.

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[1] Lindsay, 81.

There was but little change in the processes of agriculture and manufacturing between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries. But as medieval society was gradually broken up and reformed, the economic life and organization were reconstructed on different lines. Industrial institutions were greatly remodelled and methods of commercial activity were radically altered. The greatest revolution, one that changed the entire economic life of the age, was in the field of commerce. To understand the significance of this revolution one need only contrast the area of trade in the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the fourteenth century the commercial monopoly of the Italian towns was limited to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, while the Hanse towns of the north were confined to the Baltic and the North Seas. The sixteenth century, in strong contrast, saw the whole world opened up to all these countries and the organization of strong trading companies to exploit the newly discovered East and West. The reactions of these epoch-making changes upon the social and economic life of the European peoples have not been given sufficient consideration by students of the history of the Church.

Geographical discovery characterized the fifteenth century. The Genoese first discovered the Azores and Madeira. Then the Portuguese, Venetians, and Genoese began to explore the western coast of Africa to trade in gold, ivory, and slaves. Guinea was reached in 1460, the Congo in 1484, and the Cape of Good Hope was rounded in 1486.

The rise of the Turkish power destroyed the commercial colonies and factories on the Black Sea, and the fall of

Constantinople in 1453 closed the Danube as a trading route. The monopoly of trade with Syria and Egypt which Venice had enjoyed was disrupted. Entirely cut off from the Eastern trade, the problem of Europe was how to discover new routes for the continuance of that lucrative business. In such a quest the English seamen attempted to find a new sea route to the north-west; Columbus discovered America, and Vasco de Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and reached Calcutta.

Invention and discovery opened up a new world for trade and commerce. The rise of the Turks to power in Western Asia and their capture of Constantinople in 1453 largely cut off trade relations between Europe and the East. In consequence the centre of world trade shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic—a fact that was epoch-making in its results. The primacy of commercial and industrial activity passed from Italian cities to the cities on the Atlantic sea-coast and to the German cities north of the Alps. These cities gained great wealth from commerce and the local industries which were established. Times were good, fortunes were accumulated, and there was a general desire for culture and education. Æneas Sylvius, an Italian of the fifteenth century, declared that Germany was the richest land on earth, and that in Nuremberg he saw houses of burghers as fine as the palaces of kings. In 1458 he wrote: "Lübeck has become so rich and powerful that Denmark, Sweden, and Norway elect and depose their kings at her pleasure."[1] The discovery of new sea routes to the East Indies and of new countries in the western world naturally transferred the centre of commerce to the Atlantic ports—to Portugal, Spain, France, Holland, and England—but this did not prevent the German merchants from attempting to monopolize the new trade.

The geographical area of the world devoted to trade up to 1492 included all countries of modern Europe, Western Asia, Northern Africa, and the adjacent seas. The wool industry was monopolized by Eastern England, the towns of France, Germany, the Low Countries, and to some extent Spain; flax by northern France and Barcelona; silk by Spain, France, and Italy; corn by France and the Baltic ports; fish by the countries surrounding the Baltic which sent their products all over Europe for Fridays and fast-days; furs and skins by Russia and the northern countries; and spices dried fruits, silks, brocades, and feathers by the East largely through Venice. These products were distributed by water routes from the Black Sea, through the Mediterranean and along the Atlantic coast to the Baltic as well as up and down the rivers; and by overland routes from Constantinople and the chief northern Mediterranean ports to the central and northern cities of Europe. There was a constant stream of traffic both ways over these main arteries of trade and from them inland to less accessible points. The Genoese and Venetian ships largely monopolized the trade of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, and the Venetians even sent their galleys around to the North Sea, while the Hanse towns controlled the waters of Northern Europe.

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[1] Janssen, i, 52.

The traveller of the fifteenth century in crossing Germany encountered "numberless barriers and customs stations", which showed vividly how the territory was split up into petty little states. Such a custom house still stands near Donauworth and bears the inscription, "Hie dass pairland 1439."[1] One rejoiced to reach a city because it meant protection by law, comforts, and enjoyable companionship.

The oldest tariff was probably in Italy in 1328. Lucerne had a tariff in 1341.[2] Other cities followed these examples.

Tolls on the frontiers of states large and small were numerous[3] and guards were stationed to collect them.[4] The entire Mosel region had a tariff.[5] An estimate of the tolls collected for the business of the Rhine valley gives the amount for 1310 as 80,000 marks or 112,000 kilograms of pure silver; for 1368 as 44,000 kilograms of pure silver; and for 1464–5 as 217,000 kilograms of pure silver.[6]

Some conception of the system of city taxes may be obtained from the list of Constance in 1422. Of the 51 persons who were taxed over 6·50 lb. hl., the taxes ranged from 14 lb. hl. to 131 lb. hl., on property values running from 6,950 lb. hl. to 62,000 lb. hl.[7]

Special training for a business career became a common practice throughout Europe, but was more noticeable in Germany. Just as prospective doctors, priests, and lawyers were sent to the university for professional preparation, so boys intended for commercial life were early sent to France or Italy, or elsewhere to widen their knowledge by travel and observation, to learn new languages, to become familiar with different systems of business, preparatory to their calling. It was also quite common to secure positions for boys in large commercial establishments where they might complete their apprenticeship as masters of secular affairs. Thus Lucas Lem at the age of fourteen was sent to Venice, thence to Milan and Lyons. After this preliminary experience, he entered the employment of the Fuggers as their trade agent in France and in that capacity also visited Spain and Portugal before returning to his home in Augsburg. Frederick Behaim, a fifteen-year-old boy, was sent with a companion to Lyons in 1505 to begin his business education and did not return to Germany until 1510. The practice was quite as common then as to-day for lads to leave home to seek their fortunes.[1]

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[1] Lotz, *Kunsttopogr.*, ii, 397.

[2] Schultz, i, 686.

[3] Lamprecht, ii, 271.

[4] Ibid., 289.

[5] Ibid., 300.

[6] Ibid., 349.

[7] Schultz, i, 609.

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[1] Schultz, i, 220–1.

CHAPTER XXV

THE ECONOMIC REVOLUTION

162. *Money and Banking: Usury*

FROM the thirteenth to the sixteenth century Europe was undergoing, now slowly and then rapidly, a mighty economic transformation which was quite as important as the political changes in states and cities, or the widespread intellectual awakening, or the social readjustment, or the ecclesiastical reformation, in stimulating the transition from the medieval to modern civilization. Nothing is clearer to the careful student of the pre-Reformation period than that these forces acted and reacted on one another. The decline of the Medieval Church in its power and usefulness, therefore, cannot be understood fully without taking into account the new financial, industrial, and commercial factors that contributed to that result.

The admirable organization of the financial department of the Papacy, occasioned by the need of a larger supply of funds to conduct the gigantic work of the Church during the Babylonian Captivity and the Great Schism, powerfully aided in the creation of a new system of finance. The concentration of political power in the hands of the rulers of the national states and the consequent necessity of raising more money successfully to conduct public affairs led to the institution of new and more effective methods of filling the royal exchequers. The rise of the free cities and self-governing communes as a stimulus to trade, manufacturing and commerce created a demand for a more flexible medium of exchange. As a result of these influences more money was coined, a greater quantity of coin was put in circulation, wages were gradually raised, commodities increased in price, the cost of living became higher, industry was encouraged, and business prospered. New methods and opportunities for the employment of capital in a more productive manner arose. Fortunes accumulated in the hands of the shrewdest members of the middle class. Banking establishments and great business corporations were organized. Day labourers were paid fixed money wages. The peasants who had paid their rents in kind and services began to commute them for definite money rents. Wealth in gold rather than land and noble title became the measure of man's prosperity. As a result of these significant changes the whole scale of living and of human intelligence was fundamentally altered for the better.

The Papal financial policy caused general embitterment in Europe from the king to the peasant and nourished dissatisfaction and hostility everywhere.[1] Clever men were not slow to perceive that the easiest road to an assured income and a fat living was to seek service and office in the Church. Pope Hadrian VI complained that in Rome cooks and mule-drivers became priests and prelates.[2] Margrave Albrecht of Brandenburg possessed two archbishoprics, Mainz and Magdeburg, as well as the bishopric of Halberstadt. Wimpfeling knew a priest who had 20 benefices, among them 8 canonries, without any duties to perform. At Strassburg one prelate had 100 benefices and traded in them like a real-estate dealer. It is no wonder that the complaints against the Roman Chair grew rapidly and were taken up by each generation, nevertheless the hatred of the oppressed tax-payers for the Papal financial machine was not great enough to break the holy claims that bound them to the Church. Now and then, however, a bold spirit like Walter von der Vogelweide and Hutten urged the people to use the sword to defend their rights. The decree of Basel, approved by the Diet of Mainz in 1439 gave the German Church assurance of protection and relief through home rule measures that would counteract the influence of the countless Papal money raisers. Still the Vienna concordat of 17th February, 1448, gave the Pope a big share of the benefices and *annates* of the German Church, which was reported to be the richest in Christendom. The higher clergy in Germany had to pay dearly for their offices. The confirmation money for the archbishoprics of Mainz, Cologne, Trier, and Salzburg was reckoned at 10,000 gulden in the fifteenth century tax-lists and the pallium also cost a large sum. The payment of the *annates* was quite generally enforced in the face of serious opposition. One of the victims complained: "We poor Germans still allow ourselves to think that the Pope is an earthly God; it would be better to believe him an earthly devil, for that he really is!"[1] The sale of offices at Rome continued unabated.

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[1] Bezold, 75.

[2] Ibid., 78.

In France because the Hundred Years War closed the mines and because the people used gold and silver for precious ornaments to so great a degree these precious metals were very rare. With the revival of trade and commerce, however, the quantity of coin rapidly increased.[2]

The large sums of money raised by the Papal tax-collectors from the census, Peter's Pence, tithes for crusades, reservations, *annates*, and free will offerings in lands at a distance from the Papal court made the question of transportation of funds a difficult one. To convey cash over a long distance was expensive and hazardous even under escort. Hence arose an arrangement for the exchange of credits without the transmission of actual coin through merchants as early as 1213. The first example of this practice is found in Germany, but the practice soon became common and the business men of all European countries cooperated in the operation of this system.[3] In course of time there came into existence organized companies, or banking institutions which took over this work as a part of their business. Until the fifteenth century only the Jews and the Italians were bankers and money-changers and lenders, since the Church had everywhere forbidden interest and thus made this branch of business very unremunerative for Christians. The Jews, however, accumulated fortunes.[4] Florence was more active than any other city in developing the science of finance and practically monopolized all Papal banking. Other Italian cities soon imitated Florence in establishing banks. In 1422 there were seventy-two banks in Florence, but by 1472 through consolidation and rivalry elsewhere the number had been reduced to thirty-two.[5] These Italian banks, and particularly the Florentine, had branch houses at Avignon, and in England, France, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. At Constance and Basel during the session of the great councils the Italian bankers had their agents who did a thriving business. Many

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[1] Bezold, 77.

[2] Lavisse, IV, ii, 151.

[3] Schulte, *Gesch. des M. A. Handels*, i, 235.

[4] Bezold, 31.

[5] Schulte, *Gesch. des M. A. Handels*, i, 341.

Italian business men were located in Germany, but apparently no permanent banking branches were established there. The Germans organized their own banks, and had their branches and agents at Avignon and at the various industrial centres of Europe. An uncommonly extensive and lucrative trade sprang up between Germany and Venice during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In 1358 a Venetian bought in the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, the German mart in Venice, 1,045 pieces of linen. In 1432 a Nuremburger was owed 25,000 ducats. Felix Fabre did such a thriving business that he paid in tolls alone the sum of 20,000 ducats.[1] France had thriving banks at Paris, Cahors and Lyons. From the sixteenth century onwards the banks were divided into two classes—the banks of exchange, and the banks of deposit.

The opinion of Aristotle on the barrenness of money was quoted as proverbial throughout the Middle Ages. The early fathers of the Church held up to detestation all efforts to collect interest for the use of money as usury.[2] The result of this attitude was to throw all money dealings in the hands of the Jews during the early medieval period. But Christians began to take interest openly and tried to distinguish between unjust exaction, which was usury, and legitimate interest on capital. The Papal curia at Rome sought through its ecclesiastical punishments to guarantee the principal of loans, but not the interest. In general the Popes forbade the payment of interest, although not infrequently when in a tight place financially they themselves were forced to pay interest.[3] The hypothetical interest up to 1350 was from 6 to 10 per cent, when it fell to 5 per cent. Of course, there were many exceptions due to local conditions and the nature of the security offered. In 1270 interest charged by the Jews in Augsburg was as high as 86·67 per cent, and in Würzburg in 1444 it was 21⅔ per cent.[4]

The general trend of the rate of interest charged on money loans was downward from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. Although the Archbishop Pappos paid only 2·8 per cent on a loan in 1016, that rate was very exceptional, for in 1133 Dean Rorico de Vianna charged 33·3 per cent interest. In the

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[1] Schulte, 356.

[2] Cunningham, *Usury*; Bawerk, *Capital and Interest* (Eng. tr., 1890).

[3] Schulte, i, 268.

[4] Ibid., i, 317.

Mosel valley the legal rate of interest in 1113 was 33·3 per cent; 1150 20 per cent; 1230 23·5 per cent. Between 1161 and 1187 9 and 10 per cent were common and in 1200 22·5 per cent was charged. In 1213 Henry von Isenburg charged 8·35 per cent; Philippi Nigri in 1281 paid only 5·25 per cent on a loan of 16 pounds. The general average for the thirteenth century was about 10 per cent; the rate for the fourteenth century ranged from 7·25 to 10 per cent, although 10 was very common; in the fifteenth century the rate had fallen to 4, 5, and 6 per cent; and in the sixteenth century 4 per cent was very common.[1] As early as 1425 Martin V had modified the Church rules forbidding the exacting of interest, to the great satisfaction of the cities and bankers.

John XXIII after his deposition and imprisonment at the Council of Constance found the Medicean bankers very convenient. He borrowed from them 38,500 rh. florins with which he purchased his release, and gave them his note dated 8th December, 1418, with promise of interest.[2] Since the Church had for so long a time proclaimed the wickedness of usury, there was a great popular outcry against the bankers, who were denounced as criminal usurers. Boccaccio had condemned the practice of taking interest, and numerous writers after his time took up the cudgel against the money-lender.[3] To atone for their sins many usurers on their death-beds sought atonement by giving the money collected for interest to the Church.[4] During the forepart of the sixteenth century a general assault was made on the financial speculators as "usurers" and "robbers".[5]

The rulers of Europe were not slow in learning how to manipulate the finances for their own benefit. The French Crown changed the money fifty-eight times from 1349 to 1388. Complaints were made that the French monarchs frequently altered the money for personal profit by giving it a false value or by adulterating it, as Philip the Fair was accustomed to do. These practices were not confined to kings either, as is shown by the royal edicts denouncing the falsifiers of the coinage.[6] The financial juggling of the Emperor

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[1] Lamprecht, ii, 595, 601; Geering, 219; Ashley, *Eng. Ec. Hist.*, ii, 432.

[2] *Archiv. storico italiano*, iv, 1, 433.

[3] *Decameron*, the first day's story.

[4] Schulte, i, 270. See Matthew of Paris.

[5] Ibid., 671.

[6] Lavisse et Rambaud, iii, 296.

Frederick III in 1460 almost produced a disastrous panic. Prices and wages rose suddenly fourfold and fluctuated every two or three days. It was feared that the people would break out in revolution. To add to the confusion Germany had no uniform system of coins and values. Danzig alone had thirty-one different kinds of coin. Various devices and subterfuges were used to evade the rule of the Church forbidding the acceptance of interest. The German Church bargained with the capitalists about a loan on its income and agreed to pay from 7 to 10 per cent, not as interest but *as rent.* When Lewis the Bavarian favoured the burghers of Frankfurt with a reduction of Jewish interest to 32·5 per cent, the maximum interest rose at times to 174 per cent. The man of small means, who paid his interest weekly, suffered most, and it was this class that broke out in revolts occasionally against these outrages. Jew-baiting began. But, alas! the Christian soon learned the methods of the Jews.[1] When in 1425 Martin V modified the law prohibiting the taking of interest, banks sprang up in Germany and money-lending flourished among the "Christian Jews". Movable property, that is money, became much more important than real property, hence the foundation of the whole feudal system, which rested on land, was undermined. Gold became the open sesame and powerful passport to honour and title. Hence one is not surprised to find the rich Fuggers of Augsburg, though burghers, consorting with princes, bishops, and emperors. German humanists like Gabriel Biel and George Agricola were conscious of this great economic revolution and wrote in praise of the new science of finance. Biel even gave lectures on the subject in the University of Tübingen, and thus sought to create a scientific foundation for the new financial age. The princes and nobles, who looked with disdain on vulgar business, did not hesitate to avail themselves of the opportunities to make money. The Emperor Maximilian ordered banks to be established in Nuremburg in 1498 and the council of the city of Frankfurt-on-Main authorized the organization of four banks to lend money at a fair rate of interest. Usury and extortion became the rule rather than the exception.

With the increase in the volume of money in Europe and its more extensive use, social and industrial institutions and conditions were directly affected. Money changed both the value of property and the relation of the landlord to his peasants. As a result, since the needy nobles lacked the cash, they readily permitted the peasants to exchange their feudal obligations of service and natural labour for fixed money payments. In the end this substitution was of much greater benefit to the peasant than to the lord, for it meant a pronounced social revolution.[1]

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[1] Bezold, 33.

163. *Industrial Corporations*

As a result of the new forces set free in Europe in this period—financial, political, inventive, exploratory, intellectual, and economic—corporations and companies began to appear on a large scale. The business genius of the age was carried away by the desire to accumulate immense wealth and consequently exhausted itself in all sorts of trading societies, industrial organizations, syndicates, corporations, stock companies, and schemes for exploitation. These trading companies began in the fifteenth century for the purpose of exploiting some branch of business and it was not long until they were able not only to control but to monopolize various kinds of produce and goods. Before the fifteenth century the Italian merchants had swarmed over Europe and controlled most of the trade, but after 1400 native merchants crowded them out.[2] A craze for speculation set in. The poor hastened to invest their savings in order to become wealthy. The age was one of extravagance and luxury. Many princely fortunes were built up in Germany and elsewhere. Plutocratic tendencies were in the air.[3] One merchant with a capital of 600 gulden had earned 33,000 gulden in six years.[4] A company in Augsburg, headed by Bartholomew Rem, with a capital of 500 gulden won 24,500 gulden in seven years, 1511–1517. The Fuggers of Augsburg, who were the Rothschilds of the sixteenth century, earned 13,000,000 gulden in seven years, and in 1546 did a business amounting to 63,000,000 gulden. In addition to a general banking business, they had a monopoly of the mining industry in the Tyrol, Carinthia, Thuringia, Hungary, and Spain. The Welsers had profitable factories in Rome, Milan, Geneva, Antwerp, Lisbon, and Madeira, and even thought of colonizing Venezuela in the New World.[5] There was scarcely a city that did not have a business corporation that threatened to monopolize local trade. Geiler von Kaiserberg complained about the corners in wheat, meat, wine, and other commodities. Ambrose Höchstetter of Augsburg held a monopoly of corn one season, ash wood another, and wine still another. The moral standards of business were very low, hence fraud, deception, and trickery were very common. Manufactured articles were made of shoddy goods or were adulterated. Brick dust was mixed with pepper, short weights and measures were used, and dishonest workmen were numerous.[1] Numerous laws were passed to prevent these irregularities. In 1504 the English Parliament officially condemned frauds and adulterations, bad work, and false weights. The Diet of Germany at Cologne in 1512 condemned these monopolies and corners on pain of forfeiture of property. In 1522 the German Diet forbade the organization of corporations with more than 50,000 florins capital.

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[1] Bezold, 40.
[2] Schulte, i, 350.
[3] Ibid., 609.
[4] Steinhausen, 444.
[5] Bezold, 33–4.

Every German city had a market called a Kaufhaus in which the home and foreign products were exhibited for sale. The German merchants were reaching out all over Europe for business. In Italy they were found in trade, factories, mining enterprises, and coining mints. They played an important part in all the great international fairs like those of Champagne, Geneva, and Constance, and took the lead in developing a profitable international trade.

The merchant princes vied with the princes of blood and office for power, dominated the social and industrial conditions of Europe, and influenced political and ecclesiastical matters. They built up the cities and made them an important factor in the civilization of the day. Some of them like the Medici in Florence became patrons of learning, others built palaces and churches, towers and monuments, and erected chambers of commerce. Æeneas Sylvius reported that in Nuremburg he saw houses of merchants finer than the palaces of kings, with gold and silver plate, Venetian glass, expensive furniture and beautiful specimens of art. Sensual living, vulgar display, and loose morals prevailed among these millionaires. Through her merchants and traders Germany practically led the world. " We proclaim it aloud," he wrote in 1458, " Germany has never been richer or more prosperous than to-day. The German nation takes the lead of all others in wealth and power, and one can say with truth that God has favoured this land beyond all others." [1] Their wealth led to all sorts of extravagances in houses, dress, adornment, entertainment, and food. Gold, silver, precious stones, silks and velvets were much in evidence. Styles changed with aggravating frequency. The age was one of costly armour, gluttony, drunkenness, painted faces, and false hair and teeth.[2] The shrewd Jews reaped a rich harvest in consequence until open hostility led to their expulsion from many places.[3] The merchants by pooling their trading interests made large fortunes and were ambitious to own silver bottles and silver plates and to live like lords and princes. They even dealt in forbidden wares and transacted business under assumed names to gain profit. John Agricola wrote: "The most distant cities of Germany let no one learn art and language any more. But as soon as a German boy is old enough to read and write he is sent to Frankfurt, Antwerp, or Nuremberg in order to learn figures and to be prepared for trade opportunities." Such a course he called "blindness" and predicted that great injury would come from it for unfortunate Germany. No one wanted to be an honest worker, but all desired to be dealers and traders. As a result where there were ten dealers earlier, now there were twenty, thirty, and even forty. So important a factor had trade become that Germany had produced a man, Anton Fugger, the like of whom had not been produced since the world began.[4]

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[1] Schulte, i, 132.

The rise of a capitalist class in Europe was encouraged by the Church, it seems, because its members like the Fuggers, Höchstetters, and Ebners in Germany were found to be of great assistance in collecting the revenues of the Papacy and in forwarding them to Rome. In the economic and industrial world they were also needed to finance business, and this was done with a thoroughness seldom equalled. In order to obtain the necessary funds for various enterprises all sorts of companies were formed—banking, trading, mining, manufacturing, etc.—very much as in the modern business world. The credit system was created to stimulate undertakings in trade and commerce. Money became plentiful and circulated freely. Work by contract began. In Germany as early as 1490 loan and trust companies sprang up, and savings banks for the common people were organized. Movable property in the form of money, which is the mainspring of industry and trade, began to be more important than real property, which had been the basis of the feudal system. The debt and credit system worked radical economic changes. Loans on land assumed more and more the character of regular mortgages, and real estate thus became subordinate to money power.

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[1] Janssen, ii, 59.
[2] Ibid., 66.
[3] Ibid., 72.
[4] *Sprichtwörter*, Nos. 226, 711, 750. Quoted in Schulte, i, 129.

The purchase and sale of property was carried on somewhat as in modern times although these transactions were not so frequent. For instance in 1298 a knightly estate was purchased at a cost of 525 mr. cologne, or 59,528.0 groschen. Herr von Schoenecken sold his *hof* at Seffern in 1336 for 500 pounds or 27,500 groschen. The *dorf* of Veste and the *herrenschaft* Vallendar were sold for 10,000 gulden or 400,000 groschen in 1363. The Archbishop of Trier in 1420 bought a *hof* in Pfalzel for 999 gulden, or 27,172 groschen. The practice of borrowing money on mortgages came into use as early as the thirteenth century as is shown by the fact that in 1294 the mountains Kochem and Klatten were mortgaged for 4,553 mr. cologne, or 839,117.9 groschen. The Archbishop Dietrich of Cologne in 1426 mortgaged his estate at Alken for 2,700 gulden or 82,026 groschen. The Archbishop of Trier mortgaged his *herrschaft* at Dann for 5,000 gulden, at Schönburg for 15,000 gulden, and at Kempenich for 5,000 gulden in 1483.[1] It was still more common for the higher prelates to raise money by mortgaging a part or all of the income in tithes of benefices. Thus in 1295 the income of Sinzig was mortgaged for 1,000 mr. cologne, or 184,300 groschen; in 1314 Oberwesel and Bopford were mortgaged to Archbishop Baldwin for 12,000 pounds, or 806,400 groschen; in 1372 the income of Briedel Sheriffrick was sold for 400 gulden or 13,880 groschen; in 1419 Montabaur was mortgaged for the yearly income of 200 rhenish gulden, or 6,038 groschen; and in 1457 Mogen was mortgaged on the same terms.[2] During the period of the Great Schism with all its uncertainties these transactions were very infrequent.

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[1] Lamprecht, ii, 585–7.
[2] Ibid., ii, 587. Many other instances cited.

164. *France in the Fifteenth Century*

France in the thirteenth century was in a relatively prosperous industrial condition. The *métiers*[1] had united to form corporations in many localities and under the protection of the king and some of the grand seigneurs had become accustomed to the administration of communal life. The bourgeois, both artisans and merchants, had enriched themselves, and owned homes in the cities and farms in the country. "Les corps de métier" were organizations admirably adapted to the economic needs of the age, because they enabled the members to resist encroachments and oppressions and to secure certain privileges and advantages. Of course the chief benefit went to the masters, but the apprentices were not wholly neglected.

France had no large, wealthy, powerful societies of merchants like those in Italy and Germany. A few weak and comparatively inactive companies of merchants were organized in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The most conspicuous example was the Parisian house known as "Marchands de l'eau de Paris", or "Compagnie Française", created by a royal ordinance in 1315 with a monopoly of the navigation of the river Seine between Montes and Paris in return for which a revenue was paid to the king. The privileges of this company were many times renewed by the French monarchs and it continued until Charles VII, for the purpose of stimulating trade, ending rivalries injurious to commerce and permitting the Rouenese merchants to deal directly with Paris, abolished its privileges as well as those of the Normandy company. Companies of wholesale merchants were also organized to trade with the Orient. But the dominating idea of economic organization was the single, local corporation, whose members elected their own president in each village. The prevailing practice of the factories was to sell their output directly to the public through shops which they owned, although there were some corporations of merchants who were wholesalers and did not weave, but they played a comparatively small rôle in the industrial life of France. There was some traffic between villages and cities, however, and with foreign countries, but the means of transportation was so rudimentary and difficult that this kind of trade developed very slowly. Each village had its own hall or market in which to exhibit for sale both domestic and foreign wares and products.[1]

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[1] *Métier* meant a calling, trade, or profession.

The great national and even international fairs of this period encouraged trade and helped to create business methods in the modern sense to so great a degree that they may be taken as examples of the industrial prosperity of this period. The fairs of Champagne were famous all over Europe, and those held at Lendit, Brie, Troyes, Longy, Reims, Lyons, Provins, and Bar-sur-Aube were conspicuous social and trading centres. A scientific system of bookkeeping slowly came into use. Letters of credit were issued under Philip Augustus, and after 1339 sales were made on time payments. Freight bills were in use in the fourteenth century, and insurance societies were formed to protect business and property. The idea of a board of trade or clearing house was born.[2]

The Hundred Years War destroyed culture in France, negatived the work of the Church, checked progress, depopulated the country, impoverished the peasants, ruined the merchants and drove out foreign traders. Paris was in a wretched condition, and 24,000 abandoned houses were bought and torn down for the materials. The rents were so low that no income was derived from property. The Estates of Languedoc complained to Charles VII of "the great and indescribable poverty and extreme misery of the poor of the land which was the worst ever known". All France was prostrate, grown up in weeds and briars, and looked like a wilderness.[3] The village markets fell into ruin; the big fairs ceased to be held; trade routes were infested with brigands; the fairs of Geneva took away the business of Lendit, Beaucaire, and Champagne; the French ports were in a state of decay; and the ocean trade had gone to the Britons and Castilians. Under Charles VII France had intercourse with the outside world only through Rochelle and Languedoc, and the agents of the German merchants ceased to visit the former city.

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[1] Lavisse et Rambaud, iii, 291. [2] Ibid., 292. [3] Ibid., ii, 299.

The lucrative trade which had formerly passed from Italy through France to Flanders now went vià Germany.[1]

After the war, however, there was a sudden and pronounced revival of business of all sorts. In 1420 the great fairs of Champagne and Lyons began to flourish once more. Charles VII passed many ordinances favourable to the common people and encouraged the peasants to return to their farms and the workers to their vocations. Louis XI did even more than Charles VII for his " little folks ". When in 1467 the powerful feudal nobles threatened him with a coalition, he appealed to the *métier* of Paris, who declared that they had " always obeyed the king and served him with all their power, and they rushed to arms to preserve the city in its good obedience ". They organized sixty-one military companies and were given the privilege of wearing their uniforms and a dagger on Sundays and holidays. By abolishing imposts he encouraged new industries, particularly the manufacture of silk, and invited skilled artisans from Italy and other lands to go to France. He established more than sixty fairs to stimulate trade and commerce. Traffic by sea revived and prospered and trade with the Orient was renewed. Treaties of commerce were made with other nations. The ordinance of 1471 established the system of the concession of mineral rights so that the rich mines could be exploited, and the science of metallurgy was developed. To work the mines financial combinations of capitalists were organized, large sums of money were used, and much labour was employed. As a result the mines became great industrial centres similar to those of the present day. The first printing press was set up at the Sorbonne in 1469 and opened up a new field of business. Foreign traders from Castile, Portugal, Italy, Germany, and Flanders were encouraged to visit France. Perhaps the most successful merchant prince in France was Jacques Cœur, a shipper, banker, and armourer, who interested the king in his grand financial schemes and became fabulously wealthy. Montpellier was the centre of his trade in the Mediterranean and he had branch houses in the Levant. His activities are best described by a contemporary: " His navies transported to the Orient the cloth and merchandise of the kingdom. In return they brought back from Egypt and the Levant various kinds of silks and all sorts of spices. Arriving in France, some boats went up the Rhone, others supplied Catalonia and the neighbouring provinces, disputing in this way with Genoa and the Catalans trade which they had so far monopolized." In the fifteenth century the economic condition of France was satisfactory but not nearly so prosperous as that of Germany from which it differed so strikingly in character.[1]

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[1] Lavisse et Rambaud, ii, 298. See Petrarch, who travelled in France, *Epistolae fam.*, x, 2.

The chief factors in the civilization of the Netherlands were commerce and industry. Favoured with navigable proximity to the sea and rivers, great manufacturing cities grew up, which determined the character of the national life and the occupation of the people. By the fourteenth century the ports of the Netherlands had become very important economic factors in Europe. Bruges had a station of the Hanse League. The Teutonic Order had commercial agencies in various centres of the Low Countries and the Lombard bankers had established branches there. In fact all the countries of Western Europe had their "houses" of trade in the chief centres of Holland and Belgium, and ships from the Baltic, the Atlantic, and the Mediterranean were seen at their wharves. The city of Bruges had a population of 80,000; Ghent 100,000; Ypres in 1360 raised 2,300 soldiers; and many cities averaged 20,000 people. The population was divided into two great classes: the merchants and the workers. By the middle of the fourteenth century the popular party had triumphed: Ghent and Liège had a democratic constitution and Bruges and Ypres boasted of self-government. In the fifteenth century monarchical reaction set in and the prosperity of the Netherlands began to decline. Internal civil discord drove the foreign merchants and branch houses away. England began to establish cloth factories, enticed many of the weavers to cross the English Channel, and thus became a powerful rival in a lucrative business which the people of the Netherlands had monopolized for years.[2]

A good illustration of the operation of the economic law of supply and demand is seen in connection with the Council of Constance in the fifteenth century. The city government proclaimed the absolute freedom of trade, but ordered all merchants to charge reasonable prices and all handworkers to do honest work at fair prices. As a result of the large gathering of people at the council, merchants and workers from all lands went to Constance. About 2,000 business people of one sort or another were present. There were 16 master apothecaries with 67 assistants; 350 merchants with their wives and servants; 220 retailers; 330 bakers; 70 shoemakers; 90 blacksmiths; 45 furriers and 225 tailors; 163 wine merchants; 365 musicians, 310 barbers and bathing establishments; 46 "Heralde" and 700 public women with houses. Tents and temporary buildings were erected for business and amusement purposes and the entire city was turned into a huge fair. Even the Rota of the Roman curia was there and did as thriving a business as at Avignon. The city government was alive to its responsibilities and managed its affairs with much greater speed than did the ecclesiastical council.[1]

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[1] Lavisse et Rambaud, iii, 145–50; 307. An excellent bibliography on the economic condition of France is given in ibid., 311.

[2] Lavisse et Rambaud, iii, 437–47.

165. *Wages and Prices*

When money as a medium of exchange became plentiful, the master workmen and even the common labourers began to demand the payment of wages instead of their keeping and a pittance. The great influx of gold and silver at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the consequent rise in the prices of various commodities, fomented among the lower classes a defiant and democratic spirit.

The wages paid in Uberlingen in 1400 and in Constance in 1436 on the Bodensee were as follows:—Gravediggers, 6–12 and 12–15 pfennige; lace makers, 6–8 and 12–15; tailors, 6–8 and 10–12; "löser," 4 and 7; grape pickers, 5–6 and 6; "tunger," 7–9 and 8–15; ground workers, 7–9; shovellers, 7–12 and 17; binders, 14; stitchers, 6–9 and 8–12; "erbrechen," 6 and 7–12; weeders, 6 and 7; "behanen," 6 and 12; knotters, 4 and 4–5; bucket carriers, 10 and 10; carters, 8.[2]

In Germany the average daily wage of the unskilled labourer during the first part of the fourteenth century was 2·6 silver groschen, and during the first half of the fifteenth century it had fallen to 1·8.[3] In the thirteenth century the following wages were paid for the month of June, 1277, for 6 days labour, 28 shillings; 1278, 6 days, 37 shillings; 1279, 5 days, 24 shillings; 1280, 4 days, 16 shillings; 1281, 3 days, 5 shillings; and in February, 1281, 5 days, 12 pence. In winter the average daily wage was 1·96 pence.[1] Stone masons were paid 6·25 pence per day for the period 1277–1280; a wagon driver received 2·5 pence daily for his services in the winter of 1284; a carpenter in April, 1278, earned 2·7 pence daily; and a messenger received 24 pence for a day's service in 1276.[2] In 1327 a gatekeeper received 373·7 groschen per year, or 1·35 groschen daily; a waiter 690·5 yearly or 1·92 daily; and a gardener 100·74 annually or ·28 each day.[3] In addition they also received a certain quantity of rye and wine. To build a house in 1345, unskilled labourers were paid 4 pence daily, stone quarry men 5 to 8, and stone-cutters 8 pence to 1 shilling.[4]

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[1] Gotheim, i, 484.

[2] These terms seem to pertain to the wine industry. Gotheim, i, 484.

[3] Lamprecht, i, 620.

The price of commodities varied greatly in different years. From 1200 to 1219 the price of rye fluctuated from 3·3 to 10 shillings and "spelt" from 1·5 to 5 a "fache" or measure.[5] In 1324 75 "fache" of rye and 369 of oats were worth 6,669 silver groschen and in 1465 80 of rye and 150 of oats brought 2,578 groschen.[6] A load of wine was worth 500 groschen in the fourteenth century, but only 300 in the fifteenth. A quantity of rye which brought 55 groschen in the fourteenth century fell in value to 37·4 in the fourteenth and to 17·75 in 1500.[7] As the value of products decreased, the value of land increased. For instance, a "morgan" of land which cost 1,184 groschen in the twelfth century had increased to 1,671 the next century and was worth 3,085 the latter part of the fourteenth century.[8] In Coblenz between 1444 and 1465 the average cost of a pound of steak was ·73 groschen, veal ·51, mutton ·56, pork ·63, salmon 1, chickens 1·22 each, eggs 1·57 per 25, and milk ·4 a measure. In Cologne a burgher named Hermann von Goch's books for 1391–1393 show that he paid the following prices: 25 eggs, 2·03 groschen; peas, 70·88 per mlr.; a goose, 3·74; a duck, 8·55; a young rooster, 2·7; a herring, 1·89; beef, ·72 a pound; pheasant, 3·16; grapes, 2·36 a talentum; wine, 1·53 a quart; a pair of wooden shoes, 1·68; honey, 2·52 a quart; a peck basket, 9·79; a cake, 1·05;

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[1] Lamprecht, i, 524–5 [2] Ibid., 525–7. [3] Ibid., 531. [4] Ibid., 533.
[5] Ibid., 591. [6] Ibid., 619. [7] Ibid., 620. [8] Ibid., 620.

a pair of doves, 2·48; a pair of leather shoes, 4·79; an ulna of red cloth, 14·97; a talentum of sugar, 27·54; a horse from 162 to 4,320; a palus of wood, 1·53; a candle, ·6; an ell of linen, 2·88.[1] In 1465 2 cattle cost 7 florins; 4 quarters of wine 8 florins 6 alb.; a load of hay 7 florins 6 alb.; a load of straw 1 florin 13 alb.; 24 hens 1 florin. Overproduction was the cause for the fall in prices.

The daily wages in Coblenz for the period of 1432 to 1465 were as follows:—Unskilled labour, 1·6 groschen; hand labour, 1·85; women, 1·28; girls, ·6; soldiers, 3·94; roofers, 3·2 and their helpers 1·32; masons, 3·2 and their helpers 2·03; mechanics 6·4 and their helpers ·77; smiths 2·56 and their helpers ·64; wagoners 2·56; carpenters 3·2 and their helpers 1·66; city officials 8·63; city watchers ·69; and janitors, ·43.[2]

The increase of the price of horses and cows is shown by the fact that in the ninth century a horse cost 110 groschen, in the twelfth 162, in the thirteenth 1,311 in the fourteenth 1,189, and in the fifteenth 1,540. The cost of a cow increased from 88 groschen in the ninth century to 273 in the fifteenth century.[3]

The ratio of the scale of wages to the cost of living shows an interesting increase. In the ninth century wages averaged ·83 groschen, the cost of living ·75; in the thirteenth century the wages averaged ·78 groschen, the cost of living 1·38; in the fourteenth century the wages averaged 2·43 and the cost of living 2·60; and in the fifteenth century the wages averaged 1·89 and the cost of living 1·92.[4] Stated in another way the wages of a mason increased from 7·94 groschen in 1277 to 13·44 in 1392; a stonebreaker from 4·56 in 1344 to 9·23 in 1392; a plasterer from 5·13 in 1344 to 11·76 in 1392; a carpenter from 3·43 in 1277 to 6·72 in 1392.[5]

The scale of wages measured by modern standards was ridiculously low. For instance, during the most prosperous periods a common labourer could earn 9 groschen a week together with his keep,[6] or 16 groschen without his keep. Measured in the purchasing power of that day, however, the labourer's pay would go quite as far as to-day, since a whole sheep cost only 4 groschen; a pair of good shoes 3; a load of firewood 5; a good fat hen 2; 25 codfish 4; an ell of the best home-spun cloth 5; and a bushel of rye 6. The Duke of Saxony wore a grey hat that cost him 4 groschen. In the north Rhineland a day labourer could earn in addition to his keep each week a quarter of rye, 10 pounds of pork, 6 large cans of milk and two bundles of firewood. In five weeks he could earn 6 ells of linen, a pair of shoes, and a bag for his tools. Clothing was not expensive, for a chorister in Leipzig paid 7 cents for the making of a coat, trousers, jacket and hat! The earnings of 22 days would purchase a fat cow; 3 days a fat lamb; 8 days a bushel of oats, or turnips, or 2 fat geese. In Beyrouth a labourer received 1½ groschen a day and with it could buy the best beef at 2 pfennigs a pound or sausage at 1 pfennig a pound.[1] In Augsburg the daily wages of a labourer represented 6 pounds of the best meat, or 8 pounds of meat and 7 eggs, and 1 peck of peas, 1 quart of wine, and bread, with a margin sufficient for his lodging, clothing, and minor expenses. These wages and prices prevailed over all the states of Central Europe. A similar condition existed in France and Italy.[2] In England in 1400 the annual wage for a man with a wife and child was about $12·50.[3] The act of 1495 specified that a working day in summer should be from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. with half an hour off for breakfast and an hour and a half for noon. By that date the wages were greatly increased over the earlier period and were fixed by law at 26 sh. 8d. instead of 24 sh. 4d. for a bailiff; 16 sh. 8d. instead of 15 sh. 4d. for a servant; and 5d. in winter and 6d. in summer per day for a common labourer instead of 4d. and 5d. In 1485 a carpenter received 5¾d. per day. In 1515 Parliament fixed a day's work from 5 to 7 or 8 in the summer and during the hours of daylight in the winter. Prices in 1300 ran about as follows: a grass-fed ox $4, a corn-fed ox $6, a good cow $3, a fat cock 3 cents, 2 pullets 3, a fat capon 5, a goose 8, a mallard 3, a partridge 3, a pheasant 8, a heron 12, a plover 2, a swan 73, a crane 24, 2 woodcocks 3, a fat hog two years old 80, 4 pigeons 2, and 24 eggs 2.

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[1] Lamprecht, ii, 538.

[2] Ibid., ii, 540–1; 544–601. Lamprecht gives 55 pages of prices.

[3] ii, 612.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., 613. For a discussion of the economic value of Das Weistümer see ibid., 624.

[6] A groschen in silver was equal to 1⅕d. or 2⅔ cents.

[1] Bax, 200–1. A groschen = 9 pfennigs.

[2] Janssen, i, 352; Hallem, pt. ii, ch. 9; Cobbett, *Hist. of Prot. Ref.*, 471; Rogers, *Hist. of Arg. and Prices*, OV, 23, 100, 137; Sismondi, ch. 91; Luce, *Bertr. du Gesclin*, ch. 3.

[3] Traill, ii, 383.

It will be seen from these prices that the necessities of life were extraordinarily cheap. The luxuries, on the other hand, imported into the country were very costly. With the opening up of world trade on a large scale during the first half of the sixteenth century, however, conditions were reversed—luxuries declined in price and necessities increased in value. Wages also increased from ½ to 1 cent a day, but the prices of the ordinary commodities went soaring. Rye increased from 6 to 25 cents a bushel and a sheep from 4 to 18 cents. So bad were times in 1533 in Bavaria that it was decreed that "care be taken that the people eat meat only once a day, take but two meals, and that the hotels provide good boils and roasts. In view of the general destitution, all persons are advised to refrain from meat two or three days in the week."[1] At Würtemberg in 1510 the price of wine increased 59 per cent and the cost of corn 32. With the influx of silver from the New World and the greater activity in the mines of Europe with a larger output, its value was greatly depreciated and that in turn resulted in the soaring of prices.

166. *Evidences of Discontent*

Since the bankers and merchant princes formed an alliance with the Papacy and therefore seemed to be at least indirectly responsible for the financial abuses which were so numerous and so irritating, they incurred the hatred and hostility not only of the common people but also of all classes that advocated a thoroughgoing reformation of the Church. In return for the assistance given by the capitalists, the Medieval Church winked at financial irregularities and questionable methods of business. When these relationships are taken into account, it may be understood what an important part the economic factor played in the decline of the power of the Church.

Oppressed by a triple burden of taxation—ecclesiastical, political, and feudal; confronted by soaring prices; aroused by the rife speculation and business inflation; and incensed at the evidences of financial and industrial trickery and fraud, a strong protest arose against the bankers and exponents of big business. The complaints about the shrewd manipulation of prices and the imposition of an unjust load on the consumer were far from groundless. The high cost of living was quite generally felt and numerous were the efforts to fix the responsibility for this state of affairs. Of the great industrial combines Geiler von Kaiserberg said: "They make hunger and high prices, and kill poor people." He thought the merchants "greater extortioners and deceivers of the people than even the Jews had been". "These blood-suckers, corn and wine usurers, injure the whole community; they should be driven out of town and parishes like packs of wolves; they fear neither God nor man; they breed famine and thirst, and they kill the poor." The Jews, Roman lawyers, and the millionaires were all put in one detestable class. Since it was believed that agriculture was the source of all true wealth it was urged that the Church should pronounce these financial transactions godless.[1] Ulrich von Hutten justified the robber-knights because they attacked the unscrupulous merchants who were ruining Germany. "Merchants," said Erasmus, "are the vilest and most contemptible of men; they carry on the most despicable of all industries, and that moreover in the meanest fashion; and though they lie, perjure themselves, steal, cheat, and in every way impose on others, they set themselves up everywhere as the first of the land—which, indeed, their wealth enables them to do. A merchant would not succeed in growing rich if he applied his conscience to the questions of usury and rascality."[2] Hostility against the rich traders came from the nobles and poor alike. Kuppener in 1508 raised a warning voice of protest against the evils of the mercantile corporations. Rullman Merswin, the Emperor Sigismund, Wimpfeling, Kilian Leib, Hans Sachs, Zwingli, and many others, including of course the peasants and day labourers, all of whom had suffered under the new economic system, were in a bitter frame of mind. As a result of public opinion, diets, municipal governments like that of Cologne in 1505, and rulers, notably Charles V, sought to prohibit monopolies. Kilian Leib called the capitalists highway robbers. Sebastian

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[1] Janssen, i, 352.

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[1] Bezold, 34.

[2] Quoted in Janssen, ii, 99. See Bax, Appendix, 231, for an interesting document on monopolies and trading companies from a commission of the Diet of Nuremburg in 1522–23.

Franck spoke of their acts as "open usury and robbery". Hans Sachs said the merchants got rich by usury and monopoly. Luther's book on "Selling and Usury" was full of vitriolic abuse. An army of the unemployed appeared and great discontent spread rapidly among them. The poor were arrayed against the rich. The angry people of Regensburg said: "Let us rob the priests and churches in order to get rich." The peasants and day labourers openly preached revolt against the Jews and the clergy, and against the commercial cities and the nobility. The Swiss had freed themselves; why should not the Germans do so? The example of the national and popular uprising in Bohemia had a tremendous influence. The Emperor Sigismund in 1431 complained not only against the leagues of the cities, but particularly against the dangerous union of the peasants.[1] When because of the economic changes in Europe the classes of rich and poor began to replace the noble and the ignoble, a defiant democratic spirit began to appear among the lower classes and socialistic ideas began to crop out. The laity were in strife, class against class, and a social revolution was actually threatened. All kinds of jokes and songs came from the common people against three classes: the nobles, Jews, and priests. "Actors, taxers, jokers, mariners, doctors, poets, and jurists are seven bad types of Christians," said Sebastian Brandt.[2] After the rebellion at Magdeburg in 1402, the chronicler said: "See here! you dear, old, white-headed burghers: one should have expected such a thing and attempted to protect the city from injuries. But you relied too much on a good police and a good government, and forgot the will of the people. The hatred between the rich and the poor is an old hatred. The poor hate all who possess anything and are prepared to injure the rich, since the rich injure the poor." In the name of God, he prayed, these inequalities should be abolished. "Obedience is dead," sang the Thuringian poet.[3]

At the opening of the sixteenth century several facts are clearly revealed by a study of the social and economic conditions:—

1. That Europe in its fundamental structure and appearances was still medieval.

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[1] Steinhausen, 444–5.

[2] Bezold, 48.

[3] Ibid., 49–50.

2. That although certain forces were at work to replace medieval by modern institutions, churchmen and scholars of the day had little suspicion that the things they saw around them were destined to pass away. That lack of discernment, save for a few gifted souls whose wisdom is usually indifferently regarded by their contemporaries, is characteristic of every period.

3. That the peasant, pricked by the memory, never quite extinguished, of the "good old times" of primitive communism and, in the midst of the general prosperity and material advantages all about him in the fifteenth century, conscious of the injustice of the exactions demanded by those above him in the social scale, viewed the oppressive burdens of feudalism and ecclesiasticism as an outright infringement of his rights. The modern spirit of that age, the great intellectual quickening at one point or another, touched him and filled him with hope for a better era and with hatred for the bonds of the old system.

4. That the power to control the civilization of Western Europe had passed out of the hands of the clergy and the feudal aristocracy into the hands of very different classes. The intellectual leadership of the clergy was transferred to the learned laymen. Kings and princes no longer selected their counsellors from churchmen but from the jurists and humanists whose ranks were recruited mostly from the middle, or burgher class. This middle class by its brains and ability acquired a monopoly of commerce, trade, business, and wealth, and thus gradually became the ascendant class in Europe. The social and economic revolution, which resulted, was the greatest single factor undermining the power and prestige of the Medieval Church during the fifteenth century.

CHAPTER XXVI

Loss of Spiritual Leadership of the Medieval Papacy

167. *General Observations*

In the year 1500 that portion of Christendom of which Rome was the capital and the Pope the acknowledged head included all of Europe westward from an irregular line drawn from the Gulf of Finland on the north to the south-eastern extremity of Italy on the south. The eastern frontier of Roman Christendom was thrown into a state of great uncertainty by the Mohammedan invasion up the Danube valley and by the activities of the Greek Catholic Church among the Slavic peoples. Iceland and Greenland had long been under the jurisdiction of the Roman Church. The maritime discoveries of the Portuguese, inspired by the energetic Henry the Navigator (1394–1460), had added the western coast of Africa and the islands adjacent thereto to the Papal dominion. In 1487 Diaz doubled the Cape of Good Hope and in 1498 Vasco da Gama reached Calicut on the Malabar coast in India and returned to Portugal the following year—an expedition that furnished an opportunity to the Pope to extend his jurisdiction to Asia. By 1500 Columbus, sailing under the Spanish flag, had made his three voyages across the Atlantic and had claimed the New World for his sovereigns and his Church. Meanwhile in 1497 and 1498 John Cabot through his discoveries had laid the foundations for the territorial claims of England, which was still a part of the Papal empire. Thus by 1500 the Pope ruled with undisputed sway over all of Central and Western Europe and had established his claims for future operations in the three continents of Africa, Asia, and America. Never before in the world's history had such a vast field for religious propagandism opened up before the leader of any religion as lay before the Roman Pontiff, if only he had been big enough and wise enough to preserve the unity of Roman Christendom by making the necessary readjustments and compromises to meet the demands and needs of the age.

It is extremely difficult to estimate the number of communicants in the Roman Church in 1500. With the exception of the Jews, some Mohammedans, and a handful of heretics, all the people old and young in Central and Western Europe were counted as members. The total number must have approximated 75,000,000. The inhabitants of America, Africa, and Asia were looked upon as possible converts. Theoretically, of course, Papal jurisdiction extended over all human beings on the earth.

Just as no secular dominion on earth could compare with the Roman Church in extent of territory and number of subjects, in like manner its wealth exceeded that of every temporal sovereign. This wealth consisted of money, endowments, lands, buildings, ecclesiastical furniture, and priestly garments, works of art, and sacred relics. The annual income in money collected by the lower clergy, the higher clergy, the monks and nuns, and the Papacy must have run into millions of dollars. It varied, to be sure, from year to year, but the average income greatly exceeded that of any secular ruler in the world. The gifts and endowments for religious and charitable purposes were so numerous that there was scarcely a church or monastery of any importance in Christendom that could not boast of an income from such establishments. The Church lands, including the Papal States and Romagna over which the Pope ruled as a temporal sovereign, constituted altogether approximately one-third of Central and Western Europe. This territory had come into possession of the Church through the centuries by inheritance, by special gifts, by treaties, by conquests, and by purchase, gradually increasing year by year. The buildings consisted of cathedrals, churches, chapels, monasteries, charitable institutions, Papal and episcopal palaces, rentable houses, stables, official buildings, and the dwellings of entire villages located on the property of the Church. Many of these buildings were gifts of the pious, others were built at the expense of the community, and still others were erected out of Church funds. Altogether they represented a vast outlay of wealth. In like manner the movable, personal property of the Church consisting of furniture, gold and silver vessels pertaining to service, tabernacles and reliquaries, priestly vestments, pictures, statuary, jewels, tools, agricultural implements, libraries of printed books and rare manuscripts, rugs and tapestries, household utensils, ships and pleasure vehicles, and live stock came into possession of the Church in many different ways and constituted an asset of great value. Finally the sacred relics found in connection with every important church and monastic establishment had a large monetary as well as sentimental value in an inventory of the wealth of the Church.

168. *The Papacy from* 1447 *to* 1503

From 1447, the date of the death of Eugenius IV, to 1503, seven different Pontiffs sat on the throne of St Peter and ruled over an undivided Church. All these Popes were Italians, except Alexander VI and Calixtus IV, strongly supported by Italian pride and conservatism, and deeply entrenched in the Italian consciousness of solidarity of interest. The Italians were champions of the preservation of institutions and customs that had lost their real significance elsewhere, and hence opposed a sweeping reformation. The restoration of the Papacy as predominantly an Italian institution encountered no national opposition there as it did elsewhere; on the contrary it appealed to Italian vanity and assured Italian prosperity. The revival of Papal power in Rome was viewed by the Italians as a source of strength rather than weakness, and as a guarantee of innumerable and tangible material advantages. Hence self-interest argued for the preservation rather than the destruction or even curtailment of Papal power.

Nicholas V (1447–1455) was the son of a poor physician, a graduate of the University of Bologna, and had travelled through France, England, and Germany. So vast was his erudition that Æneas Sylvius said of him, "what he does not know is outside the range of human knowledge." He was the most distinguished spokesman of the Roman Church at the Council of Ferrara-Bologna and was made Bishop of Bologna in 1444. Soon afterwards he was sent as the chief legate to negotiate at the convention of Frankfurt an understanding between the Holy See and the Empire with regard to the reforming decrees of the Council of Basel. His successful diplomacy was rewarded on his return to Rome with the bestowal of the cardinal's hat in 1446. At the age of 50 he was elected Pope, as the most popular member of the college.

His first task as Pope was to complete the political unity of Roman Christendom. The initial step in this direction was the conclusion of a treaty of peace with King Alfonso of Spain, who recognized the newly-elected Pontiff as the lawful chief of the Church in all his dominions. In the second place he made the Concordat of Vienna (17th February, 1448) with the German king, Frederick III, by which the king ordered all his subjects to obey Nicholas V, repudiated the anti-Pope Felix V, and abrogated the decrees of the Council of Basel against Papal *annates* and reservations in Germany.[1] On his part the Pope made concessions which relieved Germany from the subjection of investitures, and four years later crowned Frederick III as emperor—the last occasion of the coronation of an emperor in Rome. By tactful measures all the Christian states in Europe except Switzerland and Savoy, which were still loyal to Felix V, were drawn into the party of Nicholas V. The third step was to secure the resignation of Felix V, which was accomplished on 7th April, 1449, on condition (1) that Felix be given a large pension from the revenues of the apostolic chamber; (2) that Felix should receive the titles of cardinal bishop, perpetual legate, and vicar of the Holy See in the Duchy of Savoy; (3) that Felix should be assigned the first rank in the Church after that of the Pope himself; (4) that should Felix visit Rome the Pope would rise from his seat to receive him, salute him with a kiss on the mouth and not exact any humiliating marks of submission; (5) that Felix should be permitted to wear all the Pontifical ornaments except the ring of the fisherman, and the cross on his hose; and (6) that Felix should not be responsible to the court of Rome nor to councils. Thus the Schism was terminated and Nicholas V was the sole chief of the reunited Church. The new peace and unity that had come to the Church were celebrated by the jubilee of 1450, which evoked a thrill of loyal joy throughout Christendom.

It was the intention of Nicholas V to have the jubilee followed by a religious revival in all Christian countries, hence the Church opened her "treasuries of grace" connected with the jubilee dispensation, for the special benefit of those nations that had suffered most from the turmoils of preceding decades, or were prevented from visiting the Eternal City. Nicholas of Cusa was named as legate to Germany and travelled through every province dispensing blessings.

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[1] Werminghof, *Nationalkirchliche Bestrebungen*, Stuttgart, 1910, 86.

To the most vital problem confronting the Church, namely, reformation and purification, this Pontiff gave but little heed. Apparently he saw that reform was badly needed; but after the proceedings of Basel any attempt at reform was thought to be too dangerous. No attention was paid to the demands of reformers like Jacob of Juterbogk, who sought to reform the monastic evils, who accused the higher clergy of neglecting their duties, and who directed a petition to Nicholas V for the general reformation of the Church. In his *De septem ecclesiae statibus* he reviewed the work of the reform councils and, without touching on questions of doctrines, championed a drastic reformation of the life and practices of the Church on the lines laid down at Constance and Basel.[1] The ecclesiastical parliamentarism he and others advocated was answered by an array of redoubtable controversialists like Torquemada, Rodericus Sancius, Capistrano, and Piero del Monte who argued for the restoration of Papal power. Instead of the reformation so badly needed Nicholas offered the Church, as a substitute, art and learning, and he did it so wisely that the pending storm did not break forth for six decades.[2]

Threatened with the overthrow of the Eastern Empire and the fall of his capital, Constantinople, by the military Turks, the eastern emperor appealed to Nicholas V for material assistance, He sent Isidore as a legate to Constantinople with a guard of 200 soldiers, but, as a condition of aid, insisted upon the ratification of the Ferrara articles of union. Hence in 1452 the union of the Greek and Latin communions was proclaimed to the world in the ancient church of St Sophia. This was a notable triumph but short-lived, since the help offered by Nicholas V was so small that Constantinople fell in 1453. The Pope's strenuous efforts to arouse in Europe the old crusading zeal failed to produce any enthusiasm. For half a century the call of Nicholas V to expel the Turks was echoed and re-echoed throughout Europe, but with no material results.

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[1] Walch, *Monumenta med. aev.*, i and ii contains his principal works.
[2] Creighton, iii, 158.

After the short Pontificate of the aged nepotic Calixtus III (1455–1458), which was consumed by heroic efforts to arm Christendom for a common defence against Islam, Æneas Sylvius, famous as a leading literary light and statesman, ascended the Papal throne as Pius II (1458–1464). Notwithstanding his not impeccable past, which had made him an old man at 53, he was exceptionally well qualified for this responsible position. His indefatigable activity in behalf of Western civilization, which the Ottomans threatened to extinguish, excites admiration for his memory. His chief energy, however, was devoted to crushing opposition to Papal authority which was gaining ground in Germany and France. In the former country the opposition was led by the worldly Archbishop-elect Diether of Mainz who led the movement to reform the Empire, to defeat Papal encroachments, and to secure the triumph of the conciliar theory of ecclesiastical government enunciated at Constance and Basel. Diether was deposed[1] and then appealed to a future council but without result. In France the hostility to Pius II was headed by Louis IX, who sought to play the autocrat in ecclesiastical affairs by establishing a national Church. Undaunted by these difficulties, Pius II set his face firmly against all efforts of the conciliar and national parties in the Church and succeeded in preventing a new schism. His reign made it clear that reformation of the Church from within was impossible, but at the same time his skill averted for a while the threatened revolution against the Papal monarchy,

Pius II had at one time been an advocate of the conciliar theory of Church government, but elevated to the Papal chair and burdened with the responsibilities of that office, he became the most pronounced opponent of that theory. His famous bull, *Execrabilis*, in 1460, declared it an accursed and unheard-of abuse to appeal to a general council from the decisions of Christ's Vicar, who was given power to bind and loose in earth and in heaven. The Pope declared that he would damn all such appeals and impose the heaviest curses of the Church upon all such appellants. Papal decisions alone were to be received as final.[2]

In 1463, in a long letter to the University of Cologne, he denounced the conciliar theory and advocated Papal

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Raynaldus, 1461, 21.

[2] Mansi, xxxii, 259; Mirbt., 169.

absolutism as the divine institution. As storks follow one leader, and bees have one king, so the Pope as Christ's Vicar was the arbiter of all, the heir of the Apostles, the prince of the bishops. The decrees of Constance he recognized only so far as they had received Papal sanction. As to his own utterances at Basel, he expressly revoked all he had said in conflict with the bull, *Execrabilis*, as due to immaturity and ignorance. "Reject Æneas and follow Pius," he advised.[1]

Gregor of Heimberg was excommunicated, and Diether, Archbishop of Mainz, was deposed for championing the Basel decrees.[2]

The next Pope of this critical period, the wealthy and aristocratic Paul II (1464–1471), only 46 years of age, did not make the Turkish war the centre of all his activity, but took energetic measures to undermine the principle of the absolute supremacy of the state as upheld by the Venetians and by Louis XI of France, while in Bohemia he ordered the deposition of George Podebrad (1466). Before his election he together with the other cardinals had taken an oath that if elected to the supreme headship of the Church, he would reform the abuses of the Papal court and the corrupt manners of the courtiers; that within three years he would hold a general council to remove the disorders within the Church and to unite the Christian princes against the Turk; that he would not increase the number of cardinals above twenty-four and would create none who were not above thirty and thoroughly acquainted with civil and canon law and the Scriptures, and would elevate no more than one of his relatives to that dignity; that he would condemn no cardinal nor confiscate his goods without the consent of the other cardinals; that he would not alienate any part of the patrimony of St Peter without the concurrence of the cardinals; that he would engage in no wars, make no treaties, grant no tenths to princes, impose no new taxes nor increase the old ones without consulting the cardinals; that he would trust none but ecclesiastics, and those not his relatives with the government of the most important places in the Church; that he would not give the command of the army to any relative; and finally that he would have these resolutions read monthly in a full consistory, and allow the cardinals to meet yearly by themselves in order to inquire whether the promises had been fulfilled.[1] But once in office Paul II forgot all about his oath as a binding obligation.[2] Platina charged him with avarice and simony; with selling all vacant benefices, even bishoprics, without regard to merit to the highest bidders. He was avaricious and cared little how he got the money he wished to spend on his vanities and pomp. He created six cardinals during his Pontificate and among them three of his nephews. He was not an illiterate persecutor of learning, as Platina declared, although he destroyed the Roman Academy on religious grounds, but was friendly to Christian scholars. He restored many ancient monuments, made a fine collection of antiquities and works of art, built fine palaces, and probably first introduced printing into Rome. He embellished the costume of the cardinals, collected jewels, looked after the social welfare of the Romans, and instituted the carnival. He began a revision of the Roman statutes of 1363, established the special tax called the *quindennium* in 1470, and announced the jubilee for every 25 years.

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[1] Mansi, xxxii, 195–203; Gieseler, iii, 282, n. 32.

[2] Gregorovius, vii, 184.

The long Pontificate of Sixtus IV (1471–1484), with whom began the series of "political Popes", displayed striking contrasts of light and shade. His reign reveals the lamentable fact that the Father of Christendom subordinated his holy office to that of the unscrupulous Italian prince, and passed all limits in the preferment of his own family. The decay of ecclesiastical discipline grew to alarming proportions and crying abuses grew in spite of certain reforms. His inexcusable nepotism "stuck at nothing to aggrandize his very numerous tribe of nephews and relations." His feud with the Medici house culminated in the assassination of William de' Medici (1478), although it appears that he was personally guiltless of any direct connection with that atrocious deed.

The son of a poor fisherman, at an early age he joined the Franciscan order, graduated from Padua, taught for a while, and was noted for his learning and administrative ability, but once in the Papal chair he gave little thought to reformation. Hard-pressed for funds to pay the importuning creditors of his four predecessors and to support the legates he sent to

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[1] Bzovius, *Annalium*, 1464. Raynaldus gives the document.

[2] The cardinals had long been accustomed to affirm these "capitulations" for the guidance of future Popes. See Paston, iv, 11 ff.

France, Spain, and Germany to arouse the rulers of those countries against the Turks, he did not hesitate to impoverish the Papal treasury and even to sell the precious stones and jewels which Paul II had purchased at an enormous sum. His fondness for building and decoration, his own personal extravagance and the demands of his greedy nephews drained his coffers. To raise funds he exacted enormous sums from the clergy, offered the old preferments for public sale, and created a great many new ones which were disposed of to the highest bidders. As a result the entire Papal court was demoralized and infected with worldliness. Following Paul II he ordered jubilees to be held every twenty-five years for the purpose of securing funds from the faithful, and devoted the year 1475 to that purpose. The thirty-four cardinals appointed by him were for the most part very unfortunate selections, and eight of them were his nephews. He, like the other Pontiffs of the period, lacked the spiritual vision to make the Church measure up to its greatest religious opportunities.

With a clear vision he saw the peril of the Turkish encroachments, but he was unable to arouse the secular powers from their indifference, and besides, local Italian wars, in which he engaged, drove the question of a crusade into the background. He favoured the mendicant orders, as was natural, and raised his voice against the cruel and unjust proceedings of the Inquisition. The thirty-four cardinals named by him were for the most part unhappy choices, and the Sacred College, together with the Curia became more and more infected with worldliness during his Pontificate. On the cultural side, however, he did much for science and art, and allowed incredible freedom to men of letters. The Vatican Library was enriched and thrown open to the public ; the city of Rome was beautified with fine churches and paintings, and enriched with public buildings and works ; and he himself wrote several theological works of considerable contemporary interest.[1]

For the next eight years (1484–1492) the Church was under the direction of Innocent VIII, a native of Rome, whose father was a Roman senator. His youth spent at the Neapolitan court was far from blameless, and it is uncertain as to whether he was married to the mother of his numerous children. Later on he took orders, and was promoted rapidly from one responsible position in the Church to another until Sixtus IV created him cardinal-priest in 1473. His election was secured by bribery either in money or benefices. As Pope he addressed a fruitless summons to Christendom to unite in a crusade against the Turks, and in 1489 concluded a treaty with Bayezid II by which he received annually 40,000 ducats for detaining the Sultan's brother Jem in close confinement in the Vatican. For refusing to pay the Papal dues, he deposed and excommunicated Ferdinand of Naples in 1489, and gave his kingdom to Charles VIII of France, but three years later Ferdinand was restored to power. Henry VII was declared to be the lawful king of England (1486). In the bull *Summis desiderantes* (1484) severe measures were taken against magicians and witches in Germany. The infamous Torquemada was appointed grand inquisitor for Spain (1487). Plenary indulgence was offered to all who would engage in a crusade against the Waldenses. The reading of the propositions of Pico della Mirandola was forbidden on pain of excommunication. Under his auspices Portuguese missionaries were sent to the African Congo. His curia was notoriously corrupt, and he himself openly practised nepotism in favour of his children. Of the eight cardinals created by him two were relatives and one of them was a child of thirteen. Nothing in his Pontificate reveals any consciousness on his part of the dangerous tornado forming in the Church. "In darkness Innocent was elected; in darkness he lives; and in darkness he will die," said the general of the Augustinians.

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[1] Infessura, *Diario*, 75–283 ; Pastor, ii, 451, m. 284 ; Creighton, iii, 56–156.

The fifteenth century was closed by the reign of the Spanish Pope, Alexander VI (1492–1503), the most corrupt, immoral, and worldly Pontiff of the age. The Papacy under his direction, as a spiritual force in the world sank to its lowest point of usefulness and religious leadership. As a secular force in European affairs, however, it played a conspicuous rôle under Alexander VI, but it was that very fact, in large measure, that led to outbursts of discontent everywhere throughout the Church, and finally culminated in a series of revolts against the ecclesiastical hegemony of Rome.

Born near Valencia, Spain, in 1431, he saw military service, studied law at Bologna, and after his uncle's elevation to the Papal chair was created bishop, cardinal, and vice-chancellor.

He served in the Roman curia under five successive Popes, acquired much administrative experience, and won influence and wealth as a pleasing, popular prelate. His early dissolute life was in no wise changed by responsible ecclesiastical offices, and the severe reprimand of Pope Pius II. Of his many mistresses the most favoured was Vannozza dei Cattani, who bore him many children whom he openly acknowledged and lavishly provided for with wealth, honours, and advantageous marriages.

His election to the Papal office was secured through the use of larger sums of money to purchase votes than had ever been employed for a similar purpose previously or subsequently. His reign began with a strict administration of justice, orderly government and an outward show of splendour, which pleased his friends and hushed his enemies. But it was not long before his unbridled passion for enriching his relatives at the expense of the Church and his neighbours began to appear. To gain this purpose he was ready to commit any crime, to rob the Church and the Italian nobility, and to plunge all Italy into bloody wars. A long series of infamous scandals resulted such as the city of Popes had never before witnessed, riotous immorality, cruel despotism, frauds and faithlessness, murder and unmentionable crimes, and barefaced nepotism. The city swarmed with Spanish assassins, poisoners, informers, and prostitutes. Heretics and Jews were admitted to Rome on the payment of bribes. The Pope himself cast aside all show of decorum as the spiritual guide of Christendom, lived a purely secular life, and indulged in the chase, dancing, stage plays, and indecent orgies.

Although sixty-one years of age when chosen Pope, Alexander VI's chief concern was not the spiritual welfare of the flock of which he was the supreme shepherd, but the advancement of the material interests of his children. Giovanni, the eldest (b. 1474), who had already been made Duke of Gandia, was given large fiefs in the Papal States and Naples. Cesare (b. 1476), a youthful student of sixteen at Pisa, was made Archbishop of Valencia and later cardinal. The youngest son, Giuffre (b. 1481), married the natural daughter of

King Alfonso II of Naples, and received the principality of Squillace. His daughter, Lucretia (b. 1480), was thrice married to increase the Pope's political power. Other children and relatives were equally well provided for in worldly ways.

The Pontificate of Alexander VI was largely taken up with a series of intrigues and alliances with the Italian princes, the King of France, the King of Spain, the Emperor and the Sultan. He formed a combination of the Emperor, the King of Spain, the Doge of Venice, and the Duke of Milan against Charles VIII of France, whom he first opposed and then aided in his efforts to conquer Naples. The exclusion of the French from Italian affairs left the Pope and his ambitious son, Cesare, to work their will upon the minor rulers of Italy. Cesare usurped the administration over the Papal States and sought to create a strong monarchy in central Italy. In 1498 through an alliance with Louis XII of France Cesare was made a duke and given the hand of a French princess in marriage. Cesare gradually gained a complete ascendancy over his aged father, and used him and his high office to extend his tyrannical will over local rivals. Among the numerous crimes attributed to him was the murder of his own brother, Giovanni, to whose estates he succeeded (1497).

When Savanarola in his well-meant zeal demanded a general council for the deposition of the Pope, all the ecclesiastical and political power of Alexander was employed to crush him as a formidable enemy (1498). The only bright pages in the dark chapter of his reign were his efforts on behalf of the Turkish War (1499–1502), his activity for the spread of Christianity to America, and his judicial awards (May 3–4, 1493) on the question of the colonial empires of Spain and Portugal, by which he avoided a bloody war. This famous division of the earth between two Christian powers was in complete harmony with the theory and practice of the Papacy of that day, and has been much misrepresented by later historians. His interest in the fine arts and his efforts to improve the physical appearance of Rome stand out in sharp contrast to his vices and shameless nepotism.

Even viewed as a worldly prince he cannot be regarded as a great man, for he had no superior political ideas and little administrative genius. Although his supreme purpose was the aggrandizement of his family it is not likely, as has been asserted, that he had any thought of making the Papacy hereditary in the house of Borgia. Certain it is, however, that he gave to his children the temporal estates of the Church as if they belonged to him personally, and thus the secularization of the Church was carried to a pitch never dreamed of before. All Europe, and Italy especially, clearly saw that he regarded the Papacy as an instrument for worldly schemes with no thought of its spiritual obligations save in a purely formal aspect. It is not too strong a statement to say that during his Pontificate the Medieval Church sank to its lowest level of degradation. And this may be truly said after one discounts the innumerable legends and misrepresentations attached to his name.

A contemporary writer declared that as a result of the mysterious assassination of his favourite son, the Duke of Gandia, Alexander VI was "deeply distressed" and "minded to change his life and become a different man". Large sums were given for improvements in the churches of Rome. In a consistory "he promised a reform of the Church, both in temporal and spiritual matters, and appointed a commission of six cardinals and three prelates for this purpose".[1] The Venetian Ambassador reported that the Pope said: "From henceforth benefices shall only be given to deserving persons, in accordance with the votes of the cardinals. We renounce all nepotism. We will begin the reform with ourselves and so proceed through all ranks of the Church till the whole work is accomplished." Six cardinals were appointed on the spot to begin the preparation of a report. During the summer of 1497 the Florentine envoy reported: "The Reform Commission sits every morning in the Papal Palace." The hopes of the best men in Christendom began to rise once more. Such men as the pious general of the Camaldolese, Peter Delphinus, was filled with joy at the prospect.[2]

Pastor believed that Alexander VI sincerely desired during the summer of 1497 to institute searching reforms.[3] It was reported in August that he had commanded Giuffre and his wife to leave Rome, and that he was resolved to forbid any of his relatives to live in his neighbourhood so that nepotistic temptations might be removed from him.[1] Other councillors were added to the six cardinals on the Reform Commission, and those belonging to the court who were absent were summoned to meet in November in order to decide on measures for reform. Meanwhile Cardinals Costa and Caraffa had collected all the decrees and various schemes of reform of earlier Popes, as a basis for action, and opinions were gathered as to the particular abuses to be remedied, especially in the Papal chancery. On this data the Commission finally formulated a series of resolutions [2] from which a comprehensive Bull of Reform was drafted.

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[1] Schaff, v, ii, 451.

[2] Raynaldus, year 1497, n. 5, 6.; Martène, *Amp.*, coll. iii, 1158.

[3] *History of the Popes*, v, 513.

"By the providence of God," runs the document, "we have been raised on the watch-tower of the Apostolic See in order that in one measure we should exercise our pastoral office by removing what is bad and promoting what is good. Therefore with our whole soul we desire an amendment in morals, having observed a gradual deterioration in this respect. The ancient and salutary decrees by which councils and Popes had endeavoured to stem the tide of sensuality and avarice have been violated. Licenciousness has reached an intolerable pitch; for the nature of man is prone to evil and will not always obey reason, but holds the spirit, in the words of the Apostle, captive under the law of sin. Even when we were only a cardinal under Pius II, Paul II, Sixtus IV, and Innocent VIII, we strove to accomplish something in this direction, and also at the commencement of our Pontificate we desired to attend to this matter, but the very grave position in which we were placed by the arrival of Charles VIII of France, obliged us to lay it aside until now. We mean to begin with the reform of our own court, which is composed of members of all Christian nations, and should be an example of virtue to all. For the inauguration of this most necessary and long desired work we have selected six of the best and most God-fearing of the cardinals.[3] With their assistance, after a careful revision of the enactments of our predecessors, and due consideration of the needs of the present day, in the plenitude of our Apostolic power we publish the following ordinances to be binding for all time. We command that they be inviolably observed; but without prejudice to the validity of the decrees of our predecessors on the same subjects."[1]

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[1] Pastor, 514.

[2] Tangl., 361.

[3] Names here omitted are given in Pastor, v, 513.

The following reformatory ordinances were decreed :—

1. The Pope and his court were corrected in numerous ways. The sacred liturgy in the Papal chapel was revised and strict injunctions in regard to silence during the offices set forth. The immorality of the singers and other court officials was severely condemned. The enactments against simony and reservations were very stringent. The alienation of any portion of the states of the Church by the Pope, even under the title of a vicariate, was forbidden, and all previous decrees contravening these enactments were declared null, unless by the consent of the cardinals. The regulations dealing with the governors and castellans of the states of the Church were very strict. Promises to princes of presentations to bishoprics were forbidden. The deposition and translation of bishops were curtailed by strengthening the existing legal provisions.

2. The college of cardinals was thoroughly reformed. Cardinals were forbidden to possess more than one bishopric or to draw an annual revenue from benefices of more than 6,000 ducats. In order to fill their obligation of residence in Rome cardinals could not retain legations for more than two years. Stringent enactments were made against simoniacal practices at Papal elections and against the worldly lives of the cardinals. The canonical prohibitions against gaming and field-sports were confirmed. Visits to the secular courts of princes without the written permission of the Pope were disallowed, together with any entanglements in worldly affairs and sports. The households of the cardinals were restricted to eighty persons, of whom at least twelve must be in sacred orders, and they were not to keep more than thirty horses. Conjurors, strolling players, and musicians must not enter their palaces; nor might they employ boys and youths as body servants. Residence at the Papal court was strictly enforced. No funeral obsequies could cost more than 1,500 florins.

3. The numerous abuses connected with the Papal

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[1] Pastor, v, 513.

officials were abolished. Rigid punishments for those guilty of extortion in the collection of taxes were provided. The sale of offices was done away with. Detailed instructions were given regarding the maintenance of the attendants and workers in St Peter's. Provisions were made to correct evils connected with expectancies and reservations. Concubinage was forbidden, and all priests of every degree were required to conform to the enactments of the Bull of reform within ten days of its publication; failing this, at the end of a month the culprit would be deprived of his benefices and pronounced incapable of holding any others. Wharf-dues were declared void and the corn supply of Rome regulated. Solemn vows taken by children were pronounced invalid. The granting of secular tithes to princes were strictly regulated. The abuse of commendation was removed. Irregularities in the religious houses of men and women were eliminated. The reformation of the apostolic chancery was worked out in great detail. All abuses connected with it were suppressed. Graft and bribery were absolutely forbidden, and the various secretaries could accept nothing beyond the prescribed fees, however freely it might be offered. The document concluded with rules for the reformation of the penitentiary.

Unfortunately the Bull with all its excellent provisions never got beyond the draft stage, for the work of reform was first postponed and then entirely forgotten. Alexander VI did not possess the moral courage to give up his own licentious habits and unless he set the salutary example it was useless to expect his subordinates to do so. The great opportunity passed; the old evils gradually revived and became more numerous than ever under the unstifled demon of sensuality.[1]

The lamentable failure of the Roman Church to meet the crisis of the era of Reform Councils was followed immediately by a period of decline in the spiritual character of the Papacy itself that led directly to disastrous revolution against its ecclesiastical leadership. These seven Popes, whose Pontificates have been briefly described, were men famous in their own day and ours for their intellectual endowments and patronage of letters and the fine arts, and equally infamous for their personal immorality and corruption. Just in proportion as they championed the new culture, they prostituted their high office to worldly ambitions. Rome and the Vatican were embellished with works of art, and the Papal court was gay with the presence of the gifted and learned, but honest piety and sincere religious devotion to the spiritual needs of the peoples of Europe, which should have been the primary concern of the head of the Christian Church, were woefully lacking. In the face of frequent demands for a general council, Papal absolutism was completely triumphant, and for seventy years no universal council was assembled. Pius II by Bull reasserted in the strongest terms the finality of Papal authority and forbade appeals from Papal decisions. No constructive administrative measures for the welfare of the entire Church engaged the attention of any of these Pontiffs. No honest efforts were made for a thorough-going reformation of the ecclesiastical abuses and corruptions so universally deplored and denounced. No conspicuous movement of pious activity engaged the serious attention of any occupant of the chair of St Peter except the effort to arouse Western Christendom to a crusade against the conquering Turks, but even in these endeavours one may detect as the supreme purpose worldly Papal ambition rather than devotion to the true faith. Celibacy was a rule practised by a few priests and monks in Rome, but ignored by the many. The bastard children of the Popes were acknowledged without a blush and the sons and daughters of the most aristocratic families of France, Spain, and Italy were sought in marriage for them by their indulgent fathers. As a result nepotism flourished to a degree never known before in the worst days of the Papacy. More and more the Papacy came to be viewed as a political organization, an empire, resting upon ecclesiastical foundations and drawing many of its elements of strength from that association. The imposing framework of the ecclesiastical edifice was, judging from outward appearances, as solid and impregnable as ever, but the foundations were crumbling and the supports were weakened by dry rot and internal decay. It remained to be seen whether the Medieval Church still possessed enough strength to resist the mighty gales that were soon to blow down from the north.

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[1] Pastor, v, 518. For a complete list of the reforms contemplated, see Pastor, v, appendix, No. 41, p. 558.

Perhaps after all the most just method of judging the Papacy during this period would be to think of it as a temporal monarchy rather than as an organization for the salvation of men's souls. From that point of view the cardinals would be the nobles or aristocracy with their predominant secular interests, and the bishops would be the lesser nobility. The lower clergy took the rank of subordinate officials to carry out the will of the monarch and the nobility. The laity as subjects shouldered the financial burdens of the absolute government. The endeavour to revolutionize this autocracy by instituting a democratic, parliamentary system through general councils had failed and absolutism had triumphed. In consequence Alexander VI treated the cardinals as his tools to carry out his will and openly sold the perquisites of his high office to the highest bidders. The failure of the parliamentary movement was summed up in the bull *Execrabilis* of Pius II. The numerous appeals to a general council during this period were easily suppressed. Furthermore, the movements toward national Churches which had been so conspicuous in the early part of the fifteenth century were minimized by special agreements between the rulers and the Pope. The very fact that one is prone to weigh the Papacy of this epoch as a secular power with its seat of authority in politically decentralized Italy, shows how completely the Papacy had lost the moral and spiritual leadership of Christendom which had been its unique and special task. That fact accounts for the failures to arouse Europe against the Turk. No one believed any longer in the purity of the Pope's motives ; and everyone suspected some mercenary, political intrigue behind every cause, however worthy. On the other hand, the Popes believed, and with good reason, that the Italian princes and European rulers would respect their sway only if they were too strong to be attacked. These facts must be kept clearly in mind if one would understand both the strength and the weakness of the Papacy at this time.

169. *The Income of the Papacy for the Period*

The income of the Papacy during the latter part of the fifteenth century was derived from essentially the same sources as during the Avignon [1] period as follows :—

1. The Papal States from both direct and indirect taxes.

2. Peter's Pence, which was paid less regularly than during the earlier period.[2]

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[1] See I, ch. iv.

[2] Gottlob, 215.

3. Feudal tribute.
4. Appointment to office.
5. *Annates.*
6. Visitation fees.
7. Special fees for waiving the law of the Church.
8. Tithes.
9. Presents and gifts.
10. Tax on bulls.
11. Sale of offices in the Papal court.

During this epoch there was a consciousless scramble for all kinds of material and spiritual favours at the hands of the Pope and the Roman curia—dispensations, absolutions, indulgences, jubilees, legitimizations, unions, and divisions of benefices, release from censures, privilege of private religious worship, portable altars, right of confession, expectancies, reservations, collations, provisions for ecclesiastical offices, pluralities, special privileges, etc. The crying evil of office-hunting took complete possession of the clergy of all grades and reached down to the common people. It was favoured by the curia and encouraged by the Pope, because it brought large sums of money to Rome and increased the Papal income. These abuses were sufficiently grave in the earlier Middle Ages, but that period was far surpassed in the latter part of the fifteenth century. As a result of the lucrative business, the number of places for sale rapidly increased from the time of John XXII to Nicholas V.[1] In spite of promises, concordats, and reforms, Martin V used benefices and bishoprics to the best advantage. The concordats were good so far as they went, but they were valid for only five years. It is astonishing to see the mass of expectancies created and sold at this time.[2] The French and Italians appear to have been the worst scavengers for jobs and sinecures.

The right of the Pope, which was absolutely legal and unquestioned, to levy a tax of five or ten per cent on the enormously rich property of the Church in Europe, was pressed to the limit.[3] To increase the *annates*, the holders of benefices were frequently changed. The *servitia* were collected with strict regularity, although the amounts were often decreased by Papal concession or composition with the camera.

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[1] Gottlob, 189.

[2] Ibid., 190; Hubler, 130, 134.

[3] Ibid., 190.

Churches, cloisters, priories, and all benefices united to others in the time of Urban V were given fifteen years in which to pay the *servitia* by Paul II in 1469.[1]

The headships of the knightly and religious orders were virtually sold. Thus King Alfonso V of Portugal in 1461 paid 8,000 ducats for the office of Grand Master of the Order of Christ, and John II of Aragon in 1464 paid 5,000 ducats for the office of Master of the Order of Saint Jacob.[2] Burchard said that in 1483 he bought the mastership of Cremonila at 450 ducats, and in 1506 invested 2,040 ducats in an abbreviatorship. The early practice of collecting *annates* from the holders of all benefices with an annual income of 24 gulden or more filled by the Pope was continued. Fees were collected for alienation, union of benefices, reservations, expectancies, the creation of new orders and congregations, the promotion and provision of prelates, personal honours, baccalaureate and doctor's degrees, wills, etc.[3]

Boniface IX, mindful of the rising opposition to simony, attempted to restrict the number of saleable offices, but the old evil returned under John XXII and the auction of public offices under the Popes of the latter part of the fifteenth century was nothing short of scandalous. Under Pius II a secretaryship in the penitentiary brought 600 ducats, a secretaryship in the chancery 100 ducats, a protonotary 100 ducats, a notary in the auditors' camera 40 ducats, an *uditore* of the Rota 80 ducats, a priest of the registry department 51 ducats, and a messenger in the camera 50 ducats. Some offices were sold by the Pope, others by the vice-chancellor, others by the chamberlain, others by the head of the penitentiary and so on. Under the reign of Sixtus IV the price of places began to increase and under his successors the sums received for offices are almost unbelievable.

The creation of new offices in order to sell them was a common practice. For example Benedict XII had 24 abbreviatorships created. Pius II increased the number to 70. Paul II abolished the 70 new offices, but Sixtus IV, who was in financial straits on account of his numerous wars, revived 72 of these offices and sold them for 533⅓ ducats each.

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[1] Gottlob, 193.

[2] Ibid., 193.

[3] Ibid., 194.

In one deal of this sort he received 38,400 ducats.[1] 8,000 ducats went to the vice-chancellor, Borgia, afterwards Alexander VI, who had the right to dispose of 21 abbreviatorships. Sixtus IV also sold offices of procurators, notaries, protonotaries, city chamberlain, etc. Offices of janissaries, mamelukes, etc., were created and sold. Purchasers of offices who could not pay the whole sum down, were permitted to pay on the monthly instalment plan. Innocent VII, in financial distress, sold the office of librarian[2] and created a college of 100 sealers of bulls and sold each office for 500 ducats. He shared likewise in the profits of sealing papers by the chancery.[3] The college of secretaries was increased from six to thirty likewise, and sold for 2,583½ ducats, each bringing into the Papal treasury 62,500 gulden. In the bull *Non debit reprehensibile,* 31st December, 1487, Innocent VIII frankly stated that the purpose of creating these new offices was to raise funds. When Rome had been besieged by the Orsini, he explained, the defence of the city had made it necessary to raise large sums of money and even the Papal mitre and jewels had been pawned for 100,000 ducats.[4] The ordinary income of the Papacy was not sufficient to redeem them, hence offices had to be created and sold. This traffic was viewed somewhat as the sale of bonds by a municipality or state to-day. The forgery and sale of Papal documents was developed into a lucrative business by the Papal notaries, but this traffic was frowned upon by the Pope and two of the guilty notaries, who confessed to having issued fifty such documents, were hanged and burnt.[5] In 1503 Alexander VI created eighty new offices, and sold them for 760 ducats apiece. Julius II formed a "college" of 101 scriveners of Papal briefs, who paid him 14,000 ducats. Leo X appointed sixty chamberlains at a gain of 90,000 ducats, and 140 squires at a profit of 112,000 ducats.

Some idea of the income received by the purchasers of offices may be secured from the secretaryships created by Innocent VIII. The apostolic camera guaranteed to pay the buyers a total of 8,500 ducats annually, which made their salary about 14 per cent of the cost price yearly. By this arrangement, after the seventh year, the original outlay would have been paid back and thereafter the income of the office would be clear gain. On the other hand, if the holder died before the seventh year he would be the loser and the Papacy the gainer. The abbreviators received annually 8,700 florins, or about 22 per cent.[1]

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[1] Gottlob, 247.

[2] This office had always been bestowed as a reward for industry and intellectual ability. Pastor, v, 353.

[3] Gottlob, 248.

[4] Ibid., 249. Gregory XII had also pawned his tiara to Florentine merchants for 7,400 ducats.

[5] Burchard, i, 365, gives details; Pastor, v, 351.

As compared with the period of the Schism, the value of purchasable offices rapidly increased in value during the latter part of the fifteenth and the first part of the sixteenth century, and consequently augmented the temptation to use them as a source of revenue. Thus Peter of Noxeto, who had a *scriptoria* and also the *officium contradictorum*, wrote to Aeneas Sylvius in 1443 that both offices did not supply him with a living, but that should the unity of the Church be restored and the Papal obedience remain undivided the two offices would supply his needs.[2] When the recipient of the letter became Pope Pius II the office of *scriptoria apostolicarum litterarum* cost only 100 ducats, which was not enough on which to live. With the re-establishment of the unified Papal supremacy times improved. Under Sixtus IV a *scriptoria* brought 1,000 ducats, under Alexander VI 2,000 ducats, and under Leo X the price had increased to 3,000 ducats. Under Julius II in 1507 the college of *scriptores archivii* was created with 101 members who were also charged with the duties of the *Inquisitio annatorum*. These offices were valued at 74,000 ducats, and bore a yearly income of 10,850 ducats, or nearly 15 per cent, and enjoyed an additional 7 per cent from the income of the chancery. This same Pontiff created 141 *Presidentes annonae urbis*, or agents of the corn business, who paid the Pope 91,000 ducats and received annually 10,000 ducats, or almost 11 per cent, which was paid out of the sale of salt in Rome. They complained of poor treatment, and the treasurer of Julius II secured for them additional places that brought them an additional monthly income of 2 ducats. Leo X demanded of them a new loan of 286,992 ducats in return for recognizing their college with all its privileges for the future, together with a guaranteed annual income of 29 per cent. Membership in this college was regarded as such a sinecure that even rich cardinals bought membership in it.

[1] Gottlob, 248, 249.

[2] Ibid., 250.

Thus in 1514 Cardinal Lorenzo secured a place in it for 500 ducats. Under Leo X the office of *Scriptor registri supplicationum* cost 1,450 ducats, that of solicitor of apostolic briefs, 1,250 ducats, that of collector of the tax on bulls 1,400 ducats, and that of secretary of briefs 1,300 ducats.[1]

From the time of Sixtus IV to Pius IV, who ascended the Papal chair in 1559, with the exception of the noble Hadrian VI, all Popes increased the number of purchasable offices. The total value of these newly created offices has been estimated at 1,923,000 scudi—an enormous sum. In return for that sum, however, the camera had to pay an annual interest of 241,116 scudi, or an average of 12½ per cent. Such a method, it would be thought to-day, would lead inevitably to state bankruptcy, but it was obviated at that time, apparently, by pyramiding the number of saleable offices and by tapping other sources of income. Just how many offices there were for sale during the latter part of the fifteenth century is unknown, but the number must have been very large. Nor is it known what the percentage of death-rate in the Roman official list was. Under Sixtus IV the average productivity of an office was 15,000 ducats, but, of course, with all the variable factors that average cannot be accepted for the entire period.[2]

The Papal income derived from indirect taxes came, of course, from the Papal States, and did not differ from the indirect taxes found in cities and states generally. They consisted of :—

1. The wine tax, which under John XXIII was raised to 100,000 florins, declined to one-third that sum under Martin V, and may have amounted to still less under his successors, for it was a very common custom to sell exemptions from the tax.

2. The *gabelle*, or salt tax, the right to sell which was usually farmed out at a fixed price. Thus in 1458 the right was sold for 17,697 florins, while another year it brought only 15,344 florins.

3. Customs duties, which were also farmed out for about 8,000 florins.

4. Tolls which were collected throughout the Papal States at every bridge and at every city gate on provisions, cloth, silks, linen, etc. The Roman customs house did a big business.

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[1] Gottlob, 250–1.

[2] Ibid., 252.

5. Trade privileges of all sorts which were sold.

The total annual income derived from all these sources amounted to about 25,000 ducats.[1] Pius II and Paul II attempted to collect these taxes without farming them out, and were able to increase the amounts in consequence.

The accounts of the Papal treasury for the latter part of the fifteenth century may have been kept with sufficient accuracy and detail to satisfy the officials of that period, but they have come down to us in a very unsatisfactory condition. Compared with the financial records of the Avignon period, they are very scrappy and disconnected, so much so, in fact, that it is very difficult to reach an approximately correct knowledge of the receipts and expenditures. For certain months the figures seem to be complete, hence they must serve as a basis for the general estimates. For instance, under Martin V, for March, 1424, the income was 9,464 florins, the expenditure 16,067 florins, and consequently the resulting deficit 6,603 florins, while for May, 1425, the receipts were 13,842 florins, the expenses 22,022 florins, and the deficit 8,180 florins. Now if these sums are allowed to stand as representing the averages, his annual income would be about 139,836 florins and expenditure about 228,528 florins; for the fourteen years of the Pontificate of Martin V his total income would be 1,957,704 florins, the expenditures 914,112 florins, and the deficit 1,043,592 florins. It can easily be seen, however, that in selecting single months from two years the totals might be much larger, or smaller, than those given above. The income of Eugenius IV for July and August, 1434, was 48,137 florins, and if this sum is taken as an average for the year his annual income would be about 288,816 florins or a total of 4,621,956 florins for his reign of sixteen years. The expenditures are not given. Under Calixtus III the expenditures for March and April, 1456, amounted to 11,286 florins, while the expenditures fell to 3,187 florins, leaving a surplus of 8,099 florins, while the expenditures for the six months from March to August, 1457, inclusive were 148,157 florins, the expenses 147,643 florins, leaving a surplus of 514 florins. Using these sums as a basis for averages, his annual income would be 239,160 florins, the outlay 226,236 florins, and the surplus 12,912 florins. Under Pius II the deficit for the period from June, 1459, to August, 1461, was the enormous sum of 6,726,540 florins. For the period from September, 1461, to August, 1462, the income was 471,688 florins, the expenditures 461,669 florins, and the surplus 10,119 florins. Again from September, 1462, to March, 1463, the surplus was 55,765 florins, while in April, 1463, the income was 118,882 florins, the expenses 127,964 florins, and the deficit 8,164 florins. Using these sums as a basis for computing the annual income and expenditure they would be 545,136 florins and 543,420 florins respectively, but Gottlob cuts this income down to 300,000 ducats.[1] The only figures preserved for the reign of Sixtus IV are for the period from August, 1471, to July, 1473, when the total receipts amounted to 218,024 florins, the expenditures 992,412, and the deficit 774,388 florins, while in March, 1475, there was another deficit of 31,806 florins. Gottlob thinks his annual income might have been 260,000[2] ducats. Under Innocent VIII there was a deficit of 30,875 florins in August, 1485. In August, 1486, the Papal income amounted to 12,418 florins, the expenses 31,427 florins, and the deficit 19,009 florins. On this basis the annual income would have been 149,016 florins, the expenditures 377,124 florins, and the deficit 228,096 florins. In the Pontificate of Alexander VI the deficit from September, 1493, to April, 1495, was 240,318 florins. The month of August, 1496, saw a surplus of 5,532 florins, and September, 1496, 2,753 florins. From October, 1496, to March, 1497, there was another deficit of 208,318 florins. In April, 1497, there was another surplus of 7,572 florins; in May and June, 36,685 florins; in July, 1498, to July, 1499, 33,670 florins. From these figures it is impossible to arrive at any estimate of the total annual income or expenditure of this Pontiff, but it must have been very large. Julius II gathered in 130,551 florins and spent 254,294 florins, leaving a deficit of 114,753 florins from December, 1506, to November, 1507,[3] which represented the state of finances for the year.

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[1] Gottlob, 241.

By averaging up the incomes of the seven Popes named above, together with their expenditures, it might be fair to assume that the general annual income of the Papacy during the latter part of the fifteenth century was about

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[1] Gottlob, 256.

[2] Ibid.

[3] All these figures are taken from Gottlob, 259–65.

229,000 florins,[1] while the expenditures amounted to 353,000 florins, which would leave an average annual deficit of approximately 124,000 florins to be met in divers ways not yet made clear. These estimates do not include gifts which were numerous and of great value, and would have increased the income to 450,000 florins.

Undoubtedly the earlier practice of having a private Papal treasurer was continued throughout this period. For instance, Pius II's records reveal the fact that in 1464 his private treasury had a balance for April of 4,644 ducats; May, 5,146; June, 7,684; July, 8,344; and August, 14,343; or a total surplus of 42,160 ducats for five months, or about 100,000 ducats for the year. These funds may have been used by the Popes to meet the deficits. In addition to all the old methods of securing funds, the Papacy enjoyed the profits from certain monopolies, for instance, the mining of alum and the sale of salt.[2] The discovery of alum at Talfa led to the purchase of that monopoly by Pius II for 17,800 ducats,[3] and in 1463 8,000 men were employed at work there. Under Paul II the net income from this source was 100,000 ducats.[4] The amount realized from the sale of salt in 1480 in Campagna was 100,000 ducats, in Rome 30,000 ducats, and in the March of Ancona 18,000 ducats.[5]

The income derived from Rome and the Papal States approximated fifty per cent of the total Papal receipts. The seal and register tax, which under John XXII earned 45,000 ducats in forty months, or about 13,500 ducats yearly, was still in active operation. The tax of the "abbreviatores and scriptores" brought in an annual income of 4,500 ducats. Under Sixtus IV 36,000 ducats were received from "Piombo e registro", and 12,000 ducats from the "abbreviatores et scriptores". The "quinto taxa" added 50,000 ducats, making a total of about 100,000 ducats from these sources alone.[6] The years 1400, 1423, 1450, 1475, and 1500 were jubilee years, when the total contributions from gifts of the faithful were above 450,000 florins.[7] Since it was estimated that two-thirds of the total income of the Papacy went to the secular princes, the princes must have received 900,000 florins. By way of comparison, it may be stated that the total annual income of Siena was 60,000 ducats, in 1492, Bologna 60,000, Genoa 100,000, Ferrara 120,000, Florence 300,000, Naples 600,000, Milan 600,000, and Venice 1,000,000.[1]

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[1] Gregorovius estimates the Papal income for 1492 at 200,000 ducats.

[2] Gottlob, 278, 306.

[3] Ibid., 287.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid., 256.

[7] Ibid., 257.

The machinery for looking after Papal funds apparently did not differ much if any from that devised at an earlier time. The *camerar* and the treasurer were still the most important officers of the Papal court.[2]

In the Papal court the apostolic chamberlain, called the *camerarius*, was the most important personage after the Pope himself. His department was known as the *camera apostolica*. Not only did the camera administer Papal finance, but it also possessed and exercised considerable civil and criminal jurisdiction. To visualize the power of the camera it is necessary to keep in mind the fact that it exercised supreme control over all ecclesiastical financial matters in Christendom. In addition to its activities as the highest financial organ of the Roman Church, it also ruled the Papal States, and came into intimate touch with all the various departments of ecclesiastical life. It actually represented the Pope and the college of cardinals, and symbolized the victory of the monarchical principle of government in the Church. Upon the death of a Pope during the vacancy of the Papal throne, the *camerarius* held the keys of the Papal palace, guarded all the treasures, arranged for conclaves and virtually exercised the prerogatives of the Papal office. After the time of Eugenius IV the Pope chose for this important office a cardinal, who wore a special badge of office, had a special escort, became a house prelate of the Pope, was a member of the consistory, had a large body of assistants, and became the most powerful member of the Papal court.[3] His powers were increased during this period by Martin V and Innocent VIII. In exercising supreme jurisdiction over the whole income of the Church, he had the authority even to issue certain bulls, passes, and ordinances. The auditors were under his supervision. He had appointive power for certain offices, and these officials took an oath of fealty to him just as he took an oath of loyalty and faithfulness to the Pope.

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[1] Gottlob, 257.

[2] Gottlob, 266, gives an excellent discussion of these offices from the time of John XXIII to Leo X.

[3] It was to the chamberlain that Sixtus IV assigned the responsibility for beautifying Rome. Gottlob, 83.

He was the chief adviser of the Pope in all financial matters and supervised customs dues, taxes, rents, leases, collectors, treasurers, and officials generally in the Papal States and in connection with other Papal property.

For his own private account the Pope had a *camerarius secretus*, or secret chamberlain, who was not the same man as the apostolic chamberlain.

The *thesaurar*, or treasurer, appointed by the Pope or the camera, acted as a sort of vice-chamberlain. He guarded the funds and supervised the accounts. He had his own seal, received moneys, and paid out funds on order. All collectors and provincial rectors and treasurers were under his orders. As the importance of his office increased, he came to be called treasurer-general with a staff of subordinates under him.

As a result of the growth of indirect taxes, which by the fourteenth century had come to be a large source of income for the Papal treasury, a *gabellarius generalis* was appointed. An illustration of the importance of this office is seen in the example of the *gabelle* of "Ripa" and "Ripetta" in 1459, which amounted to 57,636 florins. To assume general supervision of this important branch of finance, a *camerarius gabellarum* was named. Connected with this office were the *dohanerii*, or customs officers, the general collectors who had to be bishops, and the sub-collectors.

The depositor, who was a scientifically trained banker superintended the books showing all receipts and expenditures.[1] The actual bookkeepers were called notary chamberlains, and their number varied from four to seven.[2] With the increase of the financial business of the Papacy, the principle of division of labour introduced many new officials unknown in an earlier day.[3] Connected with the camera were the dean and a body of clergy with special rules governing them,[4] trained lawyers to decide questions of justice,[5] and the auditor-general and his staff.[6]

The financial accounts were kept with a very thorough and modern spirit, and with a sharp control of funds. But the records are not complete, and consequently it is quite difficult to ascertain the exact amount of receipts and disbursements.

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[1] Gottlob, 119. He gives a list of these officials from 1421 till 1513. Ib. 111.

[2] Ibid., 113.

[3] Ibid., 116.

[4] Ibid., 115, 117–18.

[5] Ibid., 127.

[6] Ibid., 127.

To what extent Papal bookkeeping affected the secular states of Europe it is impossible to say, but apparently the methods at Rome were imitated in the Italian states and throughout Europe somewhat later.[1]

Gottlob found a very illuminating document among the Strozzi papers in the Florentine archives with the heading "*Entrata della chiesa Romana*", which gives the Papal income for the second half of the fifteenth century. The total amount for the year was 260,000 ducats. Of the twenty sources of revenue mentioned, the smallest sum was 500 ducats for minor feudal dues and the largest sum was 60,000 ducats paid for spiritual favours of various sorts. The tax for the registration of official documents amounted to 36,000 ducats. The monopoly on salt yielded 18,000 ducats. Customs duties of all sorts brought in 50,000 ducats. The sale of offices vacated by death or promotion produced 15,000 ducats. The local treasurers paid in 25,000 ducats. The composition of marriage irregularities, visitations, wills, etc., added 12,000 ducats and indulgences 10,000 ducats. Subsidies yielded 1,500 ducats, the wine tax in Bologna 4,000 ducats, and the *census* returned 8,500 ducats.[2] The various items in this document seem to be restricted to Rome and the Papal States and hence strongly support the statement already made that about half of the total Papal resources was derived in this manner.

The secular rulers of the period were notoriously bad financiers. A princely title or a royal crown did not necessarily insure an adequate income. Ruprecht of the Palatinate was a poor man. Sigismund was a miserable business man and was called "a royal beggar". Frederick III was always in debt and low in funds. Maximilian's income was so small that he was forced to cut corners at every turn to meet his expenses.[3]

The theory of the unity of mankind under the governance of a divinely appointed Pope was never more strongly asserted than during the latter part of the fifteenth century. Everywhere it was realized, however, that the political supremacy of the Papacy was lost. The existence of powerful national states like Spain, France, and England supplied forcible proofs of the dissolution of Papal secular hegemony. Just in proportion to the decline of the Pope's primacy in worldly control, there seemed to be an increase in his financial and industrial ascendancy. Papal financial influence outstripped all private and national financial interests of that day, constituted an unparalleled economic power, and affected the civilization of the entire world of that period. It was the only great international financial concern and hence its influences were felt in a thousand different directions. In the Empire, on the other hand, there was no scientific budget and no efficient accounting until the time of Maximilian. Without a financial system, with no adequate planning, and with the German states and cities attempting in every possible way to avoid taxes, Sigismund said that in 1412 the total income of the imperial treasury was only 13,000 gulden.[1] The imperial cities were somewhat better managed, but even they had no plans for building up an industrial system. It is not at all surprising to find that the emperors found it much easier to co-operate with the Popes in raising funds not only for current expenses, but for special expenditures like the marriage dowries of Austrian princesses. Apparently emperors found no embarrassing humiliation in allowing the Pope to pay their expenses to Rome as in the case of Sigismund in 1433 and Frederick III in 1468. Definite financial contracts were made between the Pope and Emperor by which the ecclesiastical income of the Roman Empire should be divided between them. Thus Nicholas V in 1452 guaranteed to the Emperor one-tenth of the total income of the clergy within the Empire, and this bargain was guaranteed by Calixtus III in 1455, Paul II in 1469, and Innocent VIII in 1487.[2]

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[1] Gottlob, 176.
[2] Ibid., 253–5, gives the document in full.
[3] Schultz, ii, 533.

France and England, on the contrary, sought to work out systems of financial independence based on national secular taxation, and in this respect were far in advance of the Empire. In those countries the Church used pressure only for taxes on the clergy, and hence the general tithes and the particular tithes fell only on the clergy. But the state also compelled them to help support the government, hence they had to bear a double burden—ecclesiastical and political. It is well worth noting at this point that just as the rise of the national states created powerful political rivals of the Papacy, so there gradually grew up a pronounced rivalry between the Church and these states as financial powers—a fact that is all too commonly overlooked in explaining the forces that led to the decline of the Medieval Church. France and England did not declare their complete financial independence of Rome, however, but continued to make mutually advantageous contracts. Spain used her incessant wars against the Moors for financial concessions from the Church, as did Hungary in war against the Turks and Poland in war against Moscow. Smaller states were more at the mercy of the Church, hence were subjected to harsher terms in these monetary arrangements.[1]

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[1] Aschbach, *Kaiser Sigismunds*, i, 430.

[2] Gottlob, 177–9, 186.

A good deal depended upon the influence of the local prince or ecclesiastical politician at the Papal court. Thus the Duke Sforza of Milan in 1496 had Alexander VI grant a tax of 40,000 gold ducats to be levied on the clergy in order to finance a war against France. Even the bull authorizing the levy was given gratis because the duke's brother was vice-chancellor. Duke Arnold of Goldern in 1446 was paid a debt by Pope Eugenius VI with a tithe on the clergy and with certain benefices. Even little communes, villages, and cities obtained permits to sell indulgences or collect tithes for local improvements like building bridges, constructing roads, erecting walls, and repairing churches and town halls simply because this was the easiest and surest way to raise funds. Sixtus IV had a grant of Church funds given the rich city of Florence for its University at Pisa.[2] and Innocent VIII did the same. The same request was made of Alexander in 1492 on the ground that it was " customary ". Examples of this sort could be multiplied almost without number.[3] Even private individuals in need appealed to the Church for assistance. Families whose members were Mohammedan prisoners asked for aid to secure their ransom. The Pope gave indulgence to all who contributed alms to save such persons from the galleys and prisons and many agents went about raising money for this purpose. The theory upon which these appeals rested was very simple: the Church, as the mother of the faithful, cared for all, yearned to help all in distress, and had money for all.[4]

The tithes and indulgences were granted for some local, national, or international purpose, as a rule, and a relatively small portion of the total sums raised went into the Papal treasury. The tithes were collected for the most part by communes, cities, princes, and kings. The sums raised were divided with the secular authorities, or diverted from their real purpose. Indeed, it might be said that the political powers benefited much more than the Papacy from these financial methods. The tithes and indulgences had the moral effect of showing that the Pope had the well nigh undisputed authority to authorize them and had the intention to use them for the social improvement of mankind. Popular conscience was largely adjusted to these ideas.[1]

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[1] Gottlob, 186.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., 187.

[4] Ibid.

Opposition to the payment of money to Rome began in the thirteenth century. In France it began under Louis the Saint in 1268, became more pronounced under Philippe le Bel, and reached its climax during the period of the Gallican Liberties.[2] In England it began in 1257 and gradually became more pronounced.[3] In Germany and Italy it commenced likewise in the thirteenth century and was accentuated as time passed.[4] There seemed to be considerable unwillingness to pay Peter's Pence, and tribute money.[5] The Great Schism had so upset the financial system of the Church that when at last unity came to the Church the Popes at Rome found it extremely difficult to make ends meet out of the regular income which hitherto had been collected.[6] Consequently various devices, old and new, were employed to make up the continual deficits. The international financial primacy of the Papacy, although shaken, was not lost entirely for Church finance still kept alive banking houses and practically subsidized European secular rulers.[7] It is a question, however, whether the Papacy of this period ever recovered the monetary preeminence enjoyed by the Avignon Papacy.[8]

170. *Expenditures of the Papacy*

The expenses of the Papacy were divided into two very distinct kinds, namely the ordinary expenses of the Papal household, or court, and the expenditures for international purposes, such as the payment of legates and special envoys, crusades, wars, gifts, etc. The Strozzi document gave the annual household expenses of the Papacy as "80,000 ducats, which in the time of Sixtus IV were equal to 100,000 ducats."[9]

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[1] Gottlob, 181.

[2] Ibid., 200.

[3] Ibid., 200.

[4] Ibid., 203, 205.

[5] Ibid., 215, 223.

[6] Ibid., 236.

[7] Ibid., 196.

[8] Ibid., 196.

[9] Ibid., 75, note 2.

Accepting the estimate of 353,000 ducats as representing the total annual expenditure of the Papacy during the latter half of the fifteenth century as approximately correct, and the household outlay as 100,000 ducats, there was left for general uses about 253,000 ducats. It was not uncommon for Popes to draw large sums out of the camera for their own special use. For instance Calixtus III had 35,000 gulden and Paul II many sums large and small from the camera.[1]

The Pontiffs of this period from 1447 to 1503 acted more as monarchs than as the successors of Christ. The secularization of the See of Rome was carried to the utmost limits. There was the sharpest kind of a contrast between the sacerdotal pretensions of the occupant of the chair of St Peter and his personal immorality. The Papal States were a recognized kingdom under the Pope as monarch. The history of Italy was bound up with the destiny of the Papacy and suffered from Papal worldliness, nepotism, ambition, and profligacy, as well as from the irruption of predatory European powers into the Italian states. The corruption of Italy was equalled only by its culture—its immorality by its enthusiasm. Sixtus IV and Alexander VI broke the power of independent princely houses in the Papal States and in Rome and made their rule supreme. These Popes displayed a pride so regal, a cynicism so unblushing, a cupidity so selfish, a venality so open, a coarseness so vulgar, and a policy so suicidal as to substantiate the conviction that they had been set up by God to warn the world against Babylon.

At the same time the history of the Papal court reveals with remarkable distinctness the contradictions between the ideas and practices of the Renaissance. In the Popes are witnessed the cultivation of learning, the patronage of arts, the passion for magnificence, the refinements of polite culture, and the vanity of display, alternating with, and indeed often combining with, barbarous ferocity of temper, wanton vulgarity, gross licentiousness, and savage and coarse tastes. A pagan dissoluteness, which would have scandalized the minions of Nero, was offset by zeal for dogma worthy of St Dominic. The same potentates worshipped the Pope as Vicar of Christ and trampled him under foot as an earthly ruler. Undisguised sensuality; fraud, cynical and unabashed; policy using as means murder, treason, rapine, interdicts, and imprisonments; the open auction of spiritual favours and privileges; the sale of public ecclesiastical offices; hypocrisy and cruelty; theft and perjury—these were the ordinary scandals that beset the Papacy. Under Innocent VIII Cardinal Cibo lost 14,000 ducats in gambling with Cardinal Riario; and on another occasion Cardinal Balue lost 8,000 ducats to the same gentleman.[1] Yet the Pope was still a holy person—his foot was kissed by thousands, great and small; his curse and blessing carried life and death; his hand unbolted the gate to heaven and purgatory; and he posed as God's representative on earth. These contradictions, so glaring to us, may have been obvious to deep thinkers like Machiavelli, Savonarola, and many others, but apparently the mass of men who witnessed them, or knew of them, were not shocked. Moral distinctions were lost, or, at least, dulled by the dazzling brilliancy of the Renaissance, by the blaze of splendour, by an outburst of new life, and by a carnival of liberated energies. Italy's corruption was camouflaged by its culture. The fermentation of a new age gave birth to these monstrous paradoxes.[2]

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[1] Gottlob, 75, note 2.

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[1] Pastor, v, 354.

[2] Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy. The Age of Despots*, 371–4.

CHAPTER XXVII

DENUNCIATION OF THE CLERGY AT THE CLOSE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

171. *Life of the Clergy during latter part of Fifteenth Century*

ONE of the best pictures of the life of the clergy in the fifteenth century is found in the sermons and writings of Dionysius Carthusianus.[1] Born in 1402 at Richel in the diocese of Lüttich he was educated as a zealous pupil in the Benedictine monastic school, and then entered the Carthusian order which enjoyed a high reputation at that time. He attended the University of Cologne, where he studied theology and philosophy and led a life out of sympathy with the rough student conduct of the period. In 1432 he returned to Roeremonde and apparently travelled around through Central Europe considerably, gaining a high reputation for purity of life as a holy devoted monk. He died in 1471 revered as a saint. His tract on " The Life of the Clergy " seems to be an accurate portrayal of the moral and social conditions of the age.

The keynote to his discussion of the episcopal office was found in the legend of an ancient sage, who related that when Constantine made his gift to the Pope the voice of an angel in heaven cried out : " To-day poison has been poured into the Church." The bishops posed as the representatives of God and the saints, as the mediums of grace, as the educators and leaders of the people in morality, but for too long a time these spiritual leaders of the Church came from the order of secular princes in the Empire, and, like secular rulers, they combined their highest spiritual powers with the possession of political power. In the earlier days of the Church the spiritual duties of the bishops had been supreme, but that was no longer the case in the fifteenth century. Then secular affairs engaged all their attention, and the struggle for property and power, which had become characteristic of the age, took possession of them too. They were obsessed with the determination to widen their boundaries, to gain more authority, hence they made advantageous alliances for waging war, and took up arms on the pretext of freeing their subjects from the tyranny of neighbouring states or from robbers. Thus by the terrors of war they increased their territory and secular authority. As lords of vast regions and princes of the Empire, their time and energy were consumed with political matters, industrial problems and business, to such an extent that they lost the spiritual side of their calling almost entirely, and had no time left for the shepherd's office. They scarcely took any part in the real church services, no longer filled the office of preacher, and paid little attention to the care of human souls.[1]

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[1] Schäfer, *Die Kirchl. Sittlichen und Socialen Zustände des XV. Jahrh. nach Dionysius Carthusianus*, Schkenditz, 1904. A doctor's dissertation of 85 pages with 20 pages of notes.

Dionysius compared the remiss bishop of his day with a man who deserted his beautiful, loving wife to live with a common maid.[2] The ancient Christian idea that the relation of the bishop to his bishopric and the flock committed to his care was based on honour and could be dissolved only by Papal permission was forgotten. Obligations and vows were lightly violated by the bishops. In the German church there was still enough genuine spirituality and religious zeal to protest against such traitorous action, but the bishops themselves did nothing to combat the danger. On the contrary, they cultivated and encouraged the secularizing and despiritualizing influences associated with the episcopal office. They took pains to conceal their spiritual offices, were ashamed to read mass, and in every possible way sought to avoid meeting all the duties of their office. They preferred a lazy life of greed, the satisfaction of their gluttonous appetites, their sensuality, and independence to the old episcopal ideal. Their supreme aim and purpose was to attain material welfare and political power.

The average spiritual level of the bishops was very low. The era of pious and learned bishops was past. The more they became princes, the less they became theologians. Surely it was a sad state when the higher clergy not only had no education, but no interest in it and cared naught for theology. Their moral level was no higher than their spiritual. Hence Dionysius denounced their proud haughtiness, called them boastful braggarts, with no energy or brains, and said they were revengeful, very partial, unjust, greedy, covetous, given to sudden anger, dissipated, lacking in independence, and cultivated in false condescension. Flatterers had their ears. They were continually seeking fat benefices with big incomes. They were very touchy and easily offended in personal honour. They kept close eyes on their subjects, however, and exacted every penny of tribute. Just like princes, they held festivals, were fond of high living, owned beautiful castles, and surrounded themselves with pompous ceremonies. They engaged in sports and hunts, gave lusty banquets, and drank wine to excess. They never asked the blessing at meals as was the former custom. Instead of reading the Bible at the table, immoral tales were read, or vulgar, lascivious stories were told. They took part in dances, visited the tournaments, and even took part in the jousts themselves. They were guilty of incontinence and unchastity, and neither married women nor virgins were safe from their lust—and they made no special secret of their conquests. They spent their time carousing around with men without morals or culture, or with lustful youths.[1]

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[1] Schäfer, 32.

[2] Ibid., 34.

Dionysius insisted that these characteristics were not confined to a few special cases, but were true of the generality of bishops. He bemoaned the fact that these evils existed at the expense of the Church and deplored the fact that the property of the Church was put to such notorious use. He declared that spiritual men, learned jurists, and theologians, seldom were made bishops or even associated with them. Hence he insisted upon the absolute necessity of reforming the bishops and prelates by the elimination of the evils catalogued and returning to simplicity, chastity, sobriety, harmless pleasures, plain dress, humble speech, and above all spirituality and learning as the prerequisites of the episcopal office. Until these changes occurred, a genuine reformation in the Church was impossible. As long as the bishops were men who had lost, or were lacking in, moral earnestness, inner ideals, and religious impulses—as long as they never gave themselves up for even an hour to serious meditation—as long as their minds were only on low, frivolous, common things—of course, they had no serious interest for either the Church or reforms. They complained about neither their parish priests, nor their subjects' and subordinates' acts. They cared little about the encroachments of the canons and monks on their privileges and exemptions. They thought only of the incomes of their holdings to satisfy their own mode of living. The bishopric was forced in one way or another to meet all the expenses of these parasitic bishops. The higher the bishop and prelate, the greater was their guilt of simony.[1]

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[1] Schäfer, 35–6.

Dionysius complained that ecclesiastical offices were quite generally paid for in the fifteenth century although no one doubted the sinful character of the traffic. Consecration was also sold for money. In fact one could not obtain a priestly honour, or holy consecration, or an ecclesiastical degree, of any sort without money. This simoniacal traffic was developed into a fixed rule of definite taxes for all church offices. All conscience was lost and simony was almost viewed as a legal right.

The power and influence of the bishop in his own diocese was unlimited. The episcopal churches were the richest, and the bishop regulated all the property of the churches, appointed the parish priests, made all the clergy wholly dependent upon him, and even ordained laymen as priests. He did not regard himself as a mere temporary user of the bishopric, but as the lord who owned it. Family interests were looked out for through nepotism and favouritism. The worth of candidates for offices was not considered, but they went to the highest bidders as a regular " business ". Consequently many minors and ignoramuses were given places and the result was the survival of the unfit in the service of the Church. Pluralism was very common, and not discouraged. All these things occurred, said the monk, to the shame of the people and the injury of the Church.

The episcopal courts which had played such an important rôle in the earlier centuries were no longer in a healthy condition. Injustice had replaced justice; money was the sole basis of decisions; crooked lawyers to conduct cases were plentiful; groundless charges led to long and expensive trials. It was easy to bring cases before the court, but in the end they proved to be invariably costly.[2]

The archdeacon ranked next to the bishop and acted for him in visiting the priests and laity. For this service he demanded "visitation" money. Grave misdeeds, incompetency and evils were commonly ignored by him. His chief sin was covetousness, consequently he misused his visitations by ignoring the sins of the clergy for the purpose of increasing his own income. His moral life was as bad or worse than that of the bishop.[1]

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[1] Schäfer, 36.

[2] Ibid., 40.

The scramble for ecclesiastical offices was exceptionally great in the fifteenth century. Persons of every age, condition, and degree of education wanted benefices and, since offices were for sale, they had no difficulty in obtaining them provided they had the cash. Simony, nepotism, and favouritism brought into the Church a most undesirable class of clergy, for many of them were very indifferent to their spiritual duties. Not a few there were who could not read the ritual, hence many literary aids and cheap cross-cuts were compiled to aid them. Others were unacquainted with their duties as confessors. As a rule the clergy cared little for books. Many of them were not true to their vows. Most of the canons led an easy life; caroused, joked, and drank; were indifferent about worship and never punctual; did the minimum of religious service; and enjoyed their benefices without thought of their duties.

The mass was an unorderly and unworthy affair. The clergy shortened the service, did not bow the knee at the word "Gloria", failed to nod the head at the name of Jesus and Mary, read hastily and enunciated badly, and sang in a displeasing nasal tone.[2]

The priests were very indifferent to soul saving. Confession was purely formal and mechanical. The Churches were very frequently used for plays and carousals. The priests thought only of their own pleasures, plenty of enjoyment, and good incomes. They were very greedy and used their offices for gain. They had bought their places at a big price and felt justified in recovering the price in some manner however questionable. Hence they demanded cash for every religious act; took advantage of the confessional "to profit by the sins of their people"; used the power of absolution for the same purpose; and "sucked the very blood out of their victims". The credulous faithful paid under the names of alms, tithes, oblations, etc., without question. The priests even used their alms for their own interests. Thus they were thieves and robbers of their own poor.[1] In their mercenary selfishness they engaged in all kinds of worldly callings—shopkeeping, money-changing, loan sharks, etc. In fact, there was no worldly business in which they did not meddle, not directly as a rule, but through intermediaries and under assumed names. Oftimes they were very unscrupulous in their methods and artists in collecting usury.

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[1] Schäfer, 41.

[2] Ibid., 42–3.

The practice of pluralism was regarded by Dionysius as the chief cause of the downfall of the Church because it was the source from which sprang so many evils—greed, ambition, dishonesty, brutality, secularizing influences, simony, questionable methods, etc. It was a common evil but the canons were particularly guilty. It led to a tremendous business and in part grew out of the fact that many benefices carried with them such a small income that the holder could not live on it alone. Many priests in the fifteenth century possessed but one benefice, hence, unless their holdings afforded a living, they felt themselves justified in adding others. The doctors of the Church said that three were legally permissible, and if that number was exceeded it was easy to obtain a Papal dispensation. One of the most flagrant evils of pluralism was that the wishes of the founders of benefices were commonly violated. The owners could not perform the duties of all their benefices, hence absenteeism was a crying abuse because residence could not be enforced. The holders frequently lived in cities, or at universities, under the sham pretence of studying. As a rule vicars were appointed at a small salary. These vicars were in nowise supervised, and since they had to live on starvation wages they were a poor, shiftless lot who soon began to pinch and squeeze the people in order to augment their incomes. Some of them received as little as 50 gulden yearly, and were in actual want. These conditions were productive of all sorts of immoralities and abuses.[2]

The lower clergy in their private life aped the higher clergy in attempting to imitate the lay princes in luxury and grandeur. They wore fine clothes like the lords, followed the fashions, owned pearls, diamonds, and gold rings ; wore coloured gloves and high boots ; and let their hair grow long to conceal the tonsure. Dionysius scornfully called them " half knights and half women in their dress ". They too sought to provide for their children and relatives out of the property of the Church. They lived in costly palaces with rich furnishings, kept a retinue of servants, and had their stables of horses. They entertained lavishly, had the richest foods, and indulged in carousals and debaucheries at banquets. They sought the company of the secular officials and wealthy burghers, with whom they took part in plays and patronized the theatres. Frequently those who were drunk at night, read mass in the morning, and then spent the day in the public-house, or out hunting. Most of them were unchaste and the constant cry of the people was that the clergy would not live a moral life. Dionysius demanded a thoroughgoing reformation of the lower clergy. He insisted that they should be forbidden to have women in their houses, that they should abstain from visiting public houses, that they should be prohibited from taking advantage of the confessional, and that they should be kept away from widows, girls, and nuns.[1] Taking the lower clergy as a whole, he did not believe that they rose above the average in morals.

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[1] Schäfer, 45.

[2] Ibid., 48.

As a concrete illustration of conditions in the Church, Dionysius gave a description of the clergy in Lüttich, his native diocese, with which he was exceptionally well acquainted. From 1419 to 1455 John of Heinsberg was the bishop—a man who loved war and personally engaged in it in a crusade against the Hussites. He was very active in politics, a typical bishop, and guilty of all the sins of the day. He was the father of 18 children and openly provided for them. A lover of pomp and display and gaudy ceremony, when he took the episcopal office, he had sirens erected before his palace and out of their breasts for three days ran red and white wine for the populace. His court was large, expensive, and, for its accommodation, he had a large palace built. He rode a horse most gaudily clothed, and took a prominent part in the tournaments of the day. He was very vain and fond of fine raiment, and as an old man he wore gold and diamonds declared to be worth 6,000 florins. On a trip to France he took with him 16,000 florins as spending money. He was guilty of pluralism himself and encouraged it in his subordinates. The common people hated him and severely criticized him.[2]

Bishop John was succeeded by Bishop Ludwig of Bourbon, who filled the office from 1455 to 1482. While still a student of 17, he was made bishop. He was a pleasure-loving prelate, who enjoyed a rich table, tournaments and balls. He lived in his huge palace like a secular prince, fond of entertaining and display. He possessed no spark of spirituality, hence completely secularized his high office. He was bishop 13 years before he read his first mass in Lüttich. At his ordination he declared that he would be a *princeps mundanus* and not a *praelatus ecclesiasticus*, hence one is not surprised to find that he had no sympathy with the cry for the reformation of his clergy and the abolition of abuses in the Church. He sold offices and honours so openly that the Papal legate found it necessary to suspend him from the episcopal office on one occasion for three years. His greed for money also led him to debase the coinage and to levy a new tax on every possible pretext. At the same time the episcopal court was a mere travesty on justice, for an equitable trial was unobtainable. He was cruel and bitter against the people of his diocese, frequently put them under the interdict, and had no heart for the poor. The people in turn hated him as a tyrant and robber, and news of his death caused general rejoicing.[1]

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[1] Schäfer, 52.

[2] Ibid., 57.

The lower clergy in Lüttich were very numerous, many of them uneducated and some of them not even ordained. In their hands religious service degenerated into a tiresome form. They too were bent upon multiplying benefices and this could be done the more easily since residence was not required. In imitation of the bishop they lived immoral lives, possessed their concubines, and gave themselves up to the grossest excesses. Efforts to abolish the evil of concubinage always led to threats of rebellion on the part of the clergy. Conditions among the lower clergy in this district could not possibly have been much worse, and yet Dionysius declared that it was fairly typical of a general state of affairs.[2]

This picture drawn, not by an enemy of the clergy and Church, but by a friend—a university-trained man, who had travelled extensively throughout Europe, going on one occasion through the Netherlands and Northern Germany with Nicholas of Cusa,[3] a man of high ideals and genuine spirituality—is a terrific indictment of the clergy high and low and explains why the Church was declining to the point of dissolution.

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[1] Schäfer, 58–61. [2] Ibid., 62–3. [3] Ibid., 64.

In his annals of Flanders, under date of 1379, Meyer asserted that it would be impossible to describe the prevalence everywhere of perjuries, blasphemies, adulteries, hatreds, quarrels, brawls, murder, rapine, avarice, thievery, robbery, gambling, whoredom, debauchery, avarice, oppression of the poor, rape, drunkenness, and similar vices. In Ghent within ten months there occurred no less than 1,400 murders committed in the bagnios, brothels, gambling-houses, taverns, and similar places. When in 1396 Jean Sans Peur led his crusaders to destroy Nicopolis, their crimes and cynical debauchery even scandalized the Turks, and led to the stern rebuke of the Turkish leader, Bajazet, whose moral life the Monk of Saint-Denis had to admit was better than that of his Christian foes. This same monastic chronicler explained the disaster of Agincourt as the result of the general corruption of the French nation. Sexual relations, he lamented, were an alternation of disorderly lusts and of incest; business was naught but fraud and trickery; avarice robbed the Church of its tithes; ordinary conversation was simply a succession of blasphemies; the Church was false to all its obligations of leadership and protection; and the bishops had nothing in them that was holy, just, wise, or even decent. Of Italy in the fore part of the fifteenth century, Luke Wadding said: "At that time Italy was sunk in vice and wickedness. In the Church there was no devotion, in the laity no faith, no piety, no modesty, no discipline of morals. Every man cursed his neighbour; the factions of Guelph and Ghibelline flooded the streets of the towns with fraternal blood, the roads were closed by robbers, the seas infested with pirates. Parents slew with rejoicing their children who chanced to be of the opposite faction. The world was full of sorcery and incantations; the churches deserted, the gambling houses filled."[1] Infessura in his diary portrayed a terrible picture of Rome under Innocent VIII. Outrages of all kinds were committed so long as the criminal had money to influence the Papal chancery. When Cardinal Borgia, the vice-chancellor, was reproached for this condition, he piously replied that God did not desire the death of the sinner, but that he should pay and live. A census of the public women in the Eternal City showed that they numbered 6,800. When the Vicar of Rome issued

[1] Lea, *Hist. of the Inq.*, iii, 642.

a decree ordering all ecclesiastics to dismiss their concubines, the Pope sent for him and ordered him to withdraw the act on the ground that all priests and members of the curia kept them, and that it was no sin.[1]

Under such ecclesiastical guidance, the moral condition of the laity was comparatively depraved. The supreme thought of the Church was to preserve uniformity of faith, while crime and sin remained sources of revenue to the priestly class that sold absolution. Hell and purgatory would be emptied, asserted Theodoric Vrie, if only the money could be found to pay for it. A Pope, if only free from heresy, no matter how much corrupted by sin and vice, claimed the absolute power to bind and loose souls. Those Popes whose wicked deeds had plunged them into hell, still had all their lawful acts on earth accepted and confirmed by God. No matter how depraved were the priests, yet their right to administer the sacraments was unquestioned. Correctness of belief was the supreme necessity—virtue was of secondary importance. A good theologian counted for much more in the eyes of the hierarchy than a good man. Heretics who were models of virtue, were ruthlessly exterminated in the name of Christ, while in the same holy name the orthodox could buy absolution for the vilest crimes for a little cash. Just so long as the unpardonable sin was a trifling error of faith, such as the poverty of Christ—so long as those who should have been the spiritual leaders of the Church, were instead leaders in vice, intemperance, debauchery, and contempt for holy things, all the sanctions of morality were destroyed and the difference between right and wrong was obliterated. It is doubtful whether a more corrupt or vile condition of society has appeared in the world's civilization than that of Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth century. Froissart in brilliant colours paints the artificial chivalric courtesies of the day, but the masses of the people were plunged into the depths of sensuality and the most brutal oblivion of the moral law. Most justly did Alvaro Pelayo hold the degenerate priesthood responsible for this deplorable condition, and assert that the laity were holier than their clerical leaders.[2]

In criticizing the clergy for immorality, the fact must be kept in mind that the general moral tone of Europe was very low and the temptations which beset the priest were numerous. In the first place, the dangers of war and pestilence reduced the number of men so that the average ratio was 10 men to 12 women. In Nuremburg in 1449 out of 2,168 persons 1,000 were men and 1,168 women, and a similar ratio was true for Basel in 1454. In Frankfurt in 1385 the ratio was 1,000 men to 1,100 women. Moreover, the çelibacy among men was far greater than among women. Thus Europe was left with a considerable surplus of women, who could not be accommodated with husbands under a strict system of monogamy.[1]

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[1] Lea, *Hist. of the Inq.*, iii, 644.

[2] Ibid., 641–2.

It is interesting to find that in addition to the ordinary occupations for women many other callings were open to them. Thus in Frankfurt from 1389 to 1497 there were 15 female artists, 3 eye doctors, and quite a few lady barbers. Jewesses especially seemed to be attracted to these professions for four of those just named were of this race. Women's wages, however, were very low. Many women entered cloisters as the easiest solution of their economic difficulty and there put in their time in service, sewing, weaving, knitting, lace-making, etc. Some copied books and others were famous for artistic needlework. In Frankfurt during the fourteenth century 6 per cent of the female population was in religious houses. Cologne had 2,000 nuns. Cantibri near Cambrai had 1,300, and Méchlin at least 1,400. Many of them went about begging for their orders, for begging was not a shame but a virtue. The women went scrambling after benefices like the men. Women's societies for literary and industrial purposes were not unknown.[2]

In an age when marital fidelity was not very strong, on the part of both sexes, it is not surprising that the priest was not true to his vow of celibacy. "Travelling women," offering themselves for sale, appeared in great crowds at princely gatherings, coronations, meetings of the reichstag and councils, tilting matches, public markets and fairs, and ecclesiastical councils, to tempt the laity and clergy alike. They went in hundreds through the lands. Similar characters had followed the crusaders to Asia and Matthew of Paris said that he knew of many Saracens who were carried to hell by Christian harlots. At the Reichstag at Frankfurt in 1395 there were 800 of these public characters present, and 1,500 attended the Councils of Constance and Basel. At the Council of Basel the Duke of Saxony, as imperial marshal, had supervision of these prostitutes. Encouraged by the authorities and supplied with horses and food, they accompanied troops on military campaigns until the time of the "Thirty Years War". The Duke of Alba took 400 on horse and 800 on foot through the military campaigns in the Netherlands, Wanton female beggars and tramps appeared everywhere. Houses of prostitutes were found in every city. In Zurich until 1516 the practice continued of the mayor, the judge, and the common women entertaining every foreign ambassador who came to the city. The nuns were notoriously bad. All these conditions supplied a constant temptation to the clergy and no pronounced, hostile public opinion encouraged them to resist it.[1]

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[1] Bucher, *Die Frauenfrage im Mittelalter*, Tübingen, 1882, 1–16.

[2] Ibid., 16–33.

Purists there were, it is true, among both laity and clergy, who raised their voices against these evils, but their protests were lost in popular approbation. Here and there a hopeful sign appeared. As early as the fourteenth century houses of rescue for fallen women appeared. But there was no positive change for the better until the Reformation brought a great improvement in both Protestant and Catholic lands. Until that time there was little morality in our sense.[2]

Conditions which produced the practice of pluralism in the fifteenth century are found in the small incomes received from benefices by the chaplains and prebends. Thus in Strassburg in 1419 a chaplain was released from the customary tax because he was so poor, his income being only 13 pounds. Another chaplain who had four benefices in 1418 drew from all of them only 13 pounds, 16 shillings. The vicar of St Nicholas received only 27 pounds annually and had to give 11 pounds of that sum to the foundation of St Thomas. Many benefices of chapters paid no more than 13 pounds. It was customary for parish priests to unite three or more benefices in order to obtain a living. Under these conditions it was but natural that pluralism should come into general use.[3] Pluralism has been characterized as "the gravest sacerdotal abuse" of the age because its baneful effects were felt throughout the whole system of Church life. It resulted in the common practice of bestowing ecclesiastical benefices upon mere boys and youths, who had not even been ordained. The younger sons of nobles and princes were appointed to the very highest posts in the Church. Towards the end of the fifteenth century the princely families worked unremittingly to get the bishoprics and archbishoprics into their own power, and when the ecclesiastical storm broke forth in Germany at least 20 of the richest sees were in possession of the sons of princes.[1] The burghers' sons were not only excluded from all episcopal seats, but even debarred from entrance into many of the aristocratic monasteries. It is a matter of no surprise to discover that it was from these monasteries and higher clergy that opposition to all reform came.

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[1] Bucher, 35–46.

[2] Ibid., 46–50.

[3] Kothe, W., *Kirchliche Zustände Strassburgs im vierzehnten Jahrhundert*, 1a Abschnitt, 1902, Doctor's dissertation.

In the German Palatinate efforts were made in the early part of the fifteenth century to reform the cloisters by Martin V, who issued a bull ordering all the monasteries to be visited and reformed in 1429; and five years later the female Cistercians at Neuburg near Heidelberg were ordered to be corrected. But apparently nothing whatever was done to carry out the orders. The Brethren of the Common Life were established in the Palatinate in 1443 and began serious efforts to improve conditions, but found little encouragement from the bishop. In 1467 the Abbot Philip died at Weissenburg—"a woman's man, who violated virgins, had many children, and left an estate of more than 30,000 gulden." Efforts made by the Church to enforce monastic discipline found but little co-operation from the secular authorities.[2]

The charge has been made quite generally that the Church during the period preceding the Reformation neglected preaching as a means of religious instruction, and as a medium of inculcating reformation, but this accusation is rather wide from the truth. As a matter of fact there never had been such an abundance of materials to serve as aids for sermonizing as in this century. There were no fewer than 98 Latin editions of the Bible, 18 translations of the Bible into German before the time of Luther and similar translations in other languages;

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[1] Janssen, *Hist. of the Ger. People*, ii, 297.

[2] Lossen, R., *Der pfälzische Staat und die Klöster im Ausgang des Mittelalters.* Münster, 1906. A doctor's dissertation.

30 collections of parts of the Bible for special services in Latin and 27 in German; commentaries on the whole Bible; glosses on single books; numerous collections of sermons in Latin and in German; lenten sermons and passion sermons; and many useful books on sacred subjects. In addition to these works there were histories sacred and profane; collections of the classics; textbooks on homilectics; and anthologies of prose and poetry. After the invention of printing these works flooded Europe in the more popular tongues and could be secured at a relatively cheap price. There was no excuse, therefore, for the clergy not to be abundantly supplied with materials for sermonizing.[1]

In estimating the quantity of preaching in the fifteenth century it must be remembered that after all only a relatively small number of the clergy were expected or authorized to preach. It is more than likely that the vast majority from whom preaching was expected met the requirements in a more or less efficient manner. In Germany it was the exception to find a village priest who could not preach. Furthermore it must be kept in mind that after all preaching was not the most important part of Church service, but a subordinate part of public worship. Regular sermons were delivered in the cities and country in Germany, and no doubt elsewhere in this period, on Sundays and all festivals.[2] The difficulty was not with the number of sermons, and probably not with the length, but with the content. The sermons were characterized by worldliness reflected in the lives of the clergy of the pre-Reformation period. Instead of preaching the word of God and the Bible they preached legends of saints and even pagan fables, because they apparently knew no better.[3] "I wish to affirm with truth," said Peter Eschenlaer of Breslau, "that should Breslau ever be lost and fall into trouble, it will be through the preachers. I mean that no city in the world has had daily such vile preaching as Breslau, early and late. The word of God should be heard in soberness and not to fill the belly." [4]

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[1] Cruel, *Geschichte der deutschen Predigt im Mittelalter*, Detmold, 1879, 451–652.

[2] Ibid., 639–47; Landmann, *Das Predigtwesen in Westphalen*, München, 1909.

[3] Meyer, A. D., *Studien zur Vorgeschichte der Reformation aus schlesischen Quellen*, Munich, 1903, 83.

[4] Ibid.

The outstanding features of the religious life of the fifteenth century were (1) pilgrimages, (2) worship of saints, and (3) brotherhoods. Every land had its holy places to which pilgrims went for some religious favour or aid. The most famous spot in Germany was Wilsnock in Preignits, but Aachen was almost as famous. Santiago de Compostella was another popular resort. Rome of course drew thousands, and the Holy Land continued to attract those guilty of the gravest crimes like murder.[1] The days devoted to the saints occupied a very large portion of the calendar and greatly interfered with the economic life of the period. The Council of Breslau urged the bishop to cut down the number of feast days.[2] The innumerable brotherhoods constituted the " insurance societies for salvation ".[3] They looked after the spiritual welfare of their members without cost. The dues were very low at first, although they rapidly advanced. Members were guaranteed a fine burial without expense to relatives. These organizations were very much in favour with the people, and covered all Europe, but seemed to be particularly numerous in Germany. Among them were prayer societies, and soon employment furnished the basis for membership, such as bakers, shoemakers, barbers, etc. In 1451, Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, seeing the evils growing out of the fad, forbade the founding of new brotherhoods. To a friend, Luther wrote: " Dear one: You have in baptism a brotherhood with Christ, all angels, saints, and Christians on earth; hold that and you have enough of brotherhoods." [4]

Monasticism was sadly demoralized and the few weak efforts to reform it had made little impression. The Abbot of Trithemius tells us that the great and venerable Benedictine Order, the mother and exampler of all the rest, which had been founded on a wise system of productive labour and religious activity, had degenerated to such a degree that the monks abroad were idle and vain, and at home given up to carnal delights with nothing to characterize their holy calling but their habit—and even that was frequently cast aside.

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[1] Meyer, *Studien zur Vorgeschichte der Reformation aus schlesischen Quellen*, Munich, 1903, 37–8.

[2] Ibid., 38. See Murray, *Museums: their History and their Use*, i, ch. 1, for a discussion of relics.

[3] Bezold, 98.

[4] Meyer, 46–9.

The monasteries had become stables for clerks, or fortresses for fighting-men, or markets for traders, or brothels for strumpets, in which the greatest of crimes was to live without sin. The abbots thought only of satisfying their appetites and vanities, their lusts, their ambitions, and their avarice, while the brethren were monks only in name, and were vessels of wrath and sin. In the internal government of the monasteries, to enforce obedience, torture and even murder were employed in some cases.[1]

The examination into the condition of the religious houses of England, which Innocent VIII ordered Morton, the Archbishop of Canterbury, to make in 1489, revealed conditions quite as bad. The original discipline had disappeared. The old and rich abbey of St Albans was a den of prostitutes, with whom the monks lived openly and avowedly. In two of its priories, the nuns had been turned out, and their places filled with courtezans for the shameless use of the monks of St Albans.[2] Among the records of the reign of Henry VII is a memorial from the farmers and gentlemen of Carnarvonshire complaining that their wives and daughters were systematically seduced by the clergy.[3]

In Spain conditions were quite as bad. When Cardinal Ximenes, in 1496, sought to reform the clergy of his diocese, he found that the monks used every ingenuity to evade his orders. Over 1,000 monks left the country, some even going to Barbary, to escape the severity of the Christian discipline. The General of the Franciscans rushed off to Rome to protect his persecuted flock. Alexander VI attempted to interfere in behalf of the monks, but found the bold reformer, Ximenes, obstinate, and conferred additional powers upon him to carry out his work of purification.[4]

The situation in Germany was in no wise exceptional. In 1476, the chapter of Brunswick, fearing that their crimes and scandals were so great that they stood in danger of losing their exemption from episcopal jurisdiction, declared that for the future, canons, vicars, and priests ought not to keep their mistresses publicly in their houses. Those who persisted in doing so, after three warnings, should be suspended from their prebends, until they rendered due satisfaction. It is evident from the character of this legislation that there was absolutely no sense of guilt, but merely a dread of loss of independence of episcopal control.

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[1] Lea, *Hist. of the Inq.*, iii, 640.
[2] Wilkins, iii, 630–3.
[3] Froude, *Hist. of Eng.*, i, 85.
[4] Prescott, *Ferd. and Isab.*, part ii, ch. 5.

The Hungarian Church had enacted a canon levying a fine of five marks on all offenders violating the law of celibacy in 1382, one half of which went to the informer, or archdeacon, and the other to the bishop. Evidently the rule did not work effectively, for the synods of Gran in 1450 and 1480, complained that archdeacons customarily accepted bribes to wink at such irregularities. The Diet of 1498 also complained that abbots and other monastic officials enriched themselves from the revenues of their offices, and then, returning to the world, publicly took wives, to the disgrace of their order.[1]

In Pomerania female companions of the clergy were commonly regarded as wives. Bishop Benedict of Camin in a synod held in 1492 upbraided the clergy for this wicked practice, deplored the costly clothing with which the concubines were bedecked to the scandal of honest women, but said that no man could separate such couples joined by the devil. His successor lamented, in 1500, that the revenues of the Church were used as marriage portions for the children of the priests, and that benefices were passed from father to son without any sense of disgrace. At all the parties and social frolics of the day these consorts were present, and apparently, for prudential reasons, the people encouraged the practice. When the Bishop of Schleswig in 1494, sought to break up the system, the opposition was so great that he was forced to give up his see and flee to Rome where he died in exile.[2]

Pope Eugenius IV in 1441 and Alexander VI in 1496, granted permission to several military orders to marry as the only mode of removing the scandalous licence prevailing among them.[3]

Judged by numbers, wealth, and general influence, monasticism in 1500 far surpassed every age of preceding ecclesiastical history. The chapters numbered 8,000, the Minorites had at least 8,000 convents, the preaching orders at least 7,000, the Cistercians 6,000, and the Benedictines 30,000. The Abbot General at Monte Cassino ruled over four bishoprics, two principalities, twenty counties, 350 castles, 440 villages, twenty-three sea harbours, and thirty-three islands. Nearly every Italian city had dozens of confraternities or brotherhoods. Florence alone boasted of seventy-three, and Rome still more. These were little local societies for spiritual improvement—something akin to modern prayer meetings and church clubs. The Archiconfraternity of Rome included in its membership the Pope and many outside princes who deemed it an honour to be thus affiliated. In addition to the spiritual objects these organizations also worked for social welfare and not infrequently had professional and vocational aims. One of the most significant things about these brotherhoods was the fact that laymen controlled them. Here were agencies that under the right kind of leadership might have led to a complete reformation of the Church and thus avoided the disastrous schism which came a few decades later. But alas! efficient guidance was lacking.

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[1] Lea, *Hist. of Sacerdotal Celib.*, 359. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

When the laity began to organize for spiritual improvement and social betterment, it is no wonder that the influence of ascetic circles began to recede and to lose their grip on the laity. Notwithstanding their numbers and great wealth, perhaps because of their worldly possessions, the monastic orders had surrendered their leadership and had lost their dynamic power. Their soul had departed and only useless forms remained. Europe was confronted with the colossal task of reforming the monks as well as the Church.[1]

The indulgence was the central point in the ecclesiastical and political life of the three centuries preceding the Reformation. The institution invariably confronts one whether he deals with the inner or the outer life of the Church. It was closely interwoven with political policies and with all projects for ecclesiastical reformation. Too long has the system been viewed only with theological eyes. The indulgence was employed by the Popes as political means for fighting heresy, for waging wars against the infidel, and for purely secular affairs such as erecting public buildings, bridges, etc.[2]

The system of indulgences, it must be remembered, was a very popular institution, and furthermore the approbation and co-operation of the rulers were secured by granting them a large share of the profits. Nor is it correct to contend that the Reformation was directed only against the abuse of indulgences, for both the use and abuse were condemned. Pains were taken officially to insure the correct interpretation and explanation of an indulgence. Thus Boniface IX announced in 1402, that all indulgences which had the words "from punishment and from guilt" were invalid on the ground that God alone could forgive the guilt of sin.[1] But the unscrupulous agent and salesman did not make that distinction, and thus the whole theory was misrepresented and misunderstood. The popularity of the system was due to the fact that punishment for sins could be obtained with such ease. For instance in Breslau indulgences could be earned on 61 days or portions of days; and these days were printed in a book for the convenience of the people. In the course of a year, therefore, hundreds and thousands of days of indulgence could be secured by those who took pains to obtain them. "On all Sundays and on all Mondays he who said two *paternosters* and two *ave marias* for their souls won 200 days indulgences" was one of the attractive statements. When Pius II in 1461, gave Breslau an indulgence to sell, and offered the city two-thirds of the receipts, the city council thanked him with these words: "Oh, what a great love of a lovable father," and proceeded to divide the bonus with the cathedral.[2] Jubilee indulgences were granted by Paul II in 1470, and Alexander VI in 1500[3] patterned after those of Clement VII in 1390, Clement VI in 1350, and Urban VI in 1389.[4] Certain privileged altars in Rome were granted exceptional indulgences. For instance, whoever went through the golden door of the Lateran Church was freed from his sins or might extend the right he had earned to souls of the dead. Anyone going up the Scala Sancta on his knees might release a soul for whom he prayed even if in the severest punishment. In St Peter's one could have a mass read at the "Souls' altar" and thereby release and save a soul, if not already damned. Any person attending the Laurentian Church every Wednesday for a year could release a soul from purgatory. A visit to the cemetery of

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[1] Zöckler, *Askese und Monchtum*, Frankfurt, 1897, ii, 547–8.

[2] Gottlob, *Kreuzablass und Almosenablass*, Stuttgart, 1906; Beringer, *Die Ablässe, ihr Wesen und Gebrauch*, Paderborn, 1906.

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[1] Meyer, *Studien*, 56; Lea, 67.

[2] Meyer, 58–60.

[3] Friedburg, *Corp. jur. can.*, ii, 1303, 1304; Amort, i, 84.

[4] Amort, 92, 94; Köhler, *Dokumente zum Ablasstreit vom* 1517, Tübingen, 1902, 23–4.

St Calixtus, which might be made as a substitute for another "in grace" released an undamned soul from the fiercest pangs. It was these spiritual benefits Luther had in mind when he said: "Indeed I heard one or two masses in Rome, and at that time it was a matter of deep regret to me that my father and mother were not dead; for I could have had the joy of releasing them from purgatory with my masses, worthy deeds, and prayers."

Calixtus III granted the first indulgence to the dead in 1457, which was repeated by Sixtus IV in 1476.[1] The latter Pontiff also granted indulgence by mediation in 1477.[2]

When the minster was burnt down at Spier in 1450, it was rebuilt with money obtained from indulgences. "And the people said that God had done it to compel the people to have their sins forgiven."[3]

John of Wessel said: "A punishment, which God has inflicted on the sinner, no man can forgive." That idea he elaborated in his writings affirming that the Gospel contained all that was necessary for salvation and declaring that the Church Fathers made no mention of indulgences."[4]

The ban was misused and even employed to collect taxes.[5] Provisions and absenteeism were crying evils.[6] German benefices were largely sold to non-residents. Thus of 102 benefices disposed of in Worms, only twelve went to Germans, and of seventy-three sold in Nuremberg, but eight were bought by Germans.[7]

The Pope on 7th January, 1478, gave the Frankfurters the privilege of eating eggs and cheese during fast days with the sole exception of Holy Week, but on 24th December of the same year, the privilege was recalled. Nuremberg had a bull from Eugenius on 7th January, 1444, permitting them to eat butter during the fast days with the exception of Fridays, providing each one who benefited would give a small contribution to the hospital of the Holy Ghost.[8]

Frederick von Landskron, the state counsellor of Sigismund, pointed the finger at the open sore in the Church when he said that the restoration of clerical honour was the only means of salvation for Christendom.[1] The clergy did not themselves observe the fasts which they imposed upon the laity, for they merely changed their food and that was not genuine fasting. Besides the bishops gave too many dispensations from fasting. " Butter letters " were even sold to build churches and a memorial of this evil still stands in the " Butter tower " of Rouen. The clergy both higher and lower gave themselves up to shameless drinking and public debauchery. Not infrequently priests managed the wine and beer houses. Thus the clergy not only lowered their own spirituality, but also corrupted the laity. The moral relations of the clergy were notoriously loose, and there was much vulgar wit and no end of complaints about clerical concubines, who were dubbed " cooks " and " housemaids ". Perhaps nothing lowered the clergy in the eyes of the laity so much as their immoralities. Finally the clergy as a class were not educated and thus could not lead the people to a higher plane of living and thinking. The high-grade men in the Church like Nicholas of Cusa saw these evils, and by exposure sought to remove them.[2]

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[1] Köhler, *Beiträge*, 37.

[2] Köhler, 39; Gieseler, II, iv, 355.

[3] Dr. Eikhart, *Weissenburger Chronik in Mone, Badischer Archiv zu Vaterlandskunde*, ii, Karlsrue, 1826.

[4] Walch, *Mon. Med. Aevi.*, Göttingen, 1757–63, 47.

[5] Meyer, *Studien*, 61, 63, 65.

[6] Ibid., 73–4.

[7] Ibid., 71.

[8] Schultz, ii, 414.

Many of the clergy were discontented with conditions in the Church, denounced the prevalence of greed, and raised their voices for the purity and simplicity of the old Christian Church. This hope was the longing of the masses and of the age. The same movement and sentiment was seen in the art of the period—a return to purity and simplicity in form and material.[3]

The Church sought to discourage attendance at theatricals and shows, but apparently without much effect. The Council of Besançon in 1480, ordered that the clergy should not take part in theatricals, and the synod of Comin in 1492, forbade attendance at the theatre.[4] But at Frankfurt the clergy in 1467, still led in the passion plays.[5] Europe was full of small troops of travelling showmen—acrobats, jugglers, monstrosities, and tamers of wild animals. Thus an elephant and ostrich appeared at Frankfurt in 1443, an elephant at Cologne in 1482 (later taken to England), an elephant at Frankfurt in 1483, and a camel at Nördlingen in 1468. Parrots and monkeys were common. Church synods sought to prevent the clergy from associating with these showmen.[6]

[1] Zöckler, *Askese und Monchtum*, ii, 550 ; Gieseler, II, iv, 253.

[2] Zöckler, 550.

[3] Schultz, ii, 637.

[4] Hartzheim, v, 509, 661.

[5] Schultz, ii, 434.

[6] Ibid., 435, 439.

It was an age of festivities and celebrations. Great, gaudy parades and processions, civic and ecclesiastical, were common occurrences all over Europe. Jousts and shooting tournaments with attractive prizes were held in all the cities, and even in the villages. Dancing was the most common type of enjoyment. Monks and nuns engaged in the recreation. Here and there a stern prelate like Geiler von Kaisenberg, preached against promiscuous dancing.[1] Drinking was an accompaniment of all these functions, and drunkenness was very common.[2] " It is a gay time to live in our day," said Ulrich von Hutten.[3]

In Piedmont, Lombardy, Venice, Liguria, Aemilia, Tuscany, Umbria, Latium, the Campagna and Sicily between 1400 and 1524, there were 102 hospitals and foundling asylums; seven almshouses; seven orphanages; 153 houses of relief for the poor; fifty-one dowries; nine educational institutions; and four other public institutions.[4]

172. *Public Opinion and the Church*

Public opinion was not the force during the fifteenth century it is now, but nevertheless, it was a source of more or less influence. The masses of common people were more truly religious than the leaders both lay and clerical. There was less piety among the men, however, than among the women who attended the church services, observed the sacraments, and obeyed the priestly commands with considerable regularity.[5] Self-torture among the women was common. Thus a woman in Mainz punished herself by wearing an iron coat of mail. Others took rigid vows of chastity. One maid who took such a vow married a slave because allowed by her Lord. Another virgin ate the eucharist once a year and nothing else for 26 years. As a test a priest gave her an unconsecrated wafer which nearly killed her and she was saved only by being given a genuine wafer. In sharp contrast to the piety of the women, it was reported that in one section not one man underwent bodily fasting, a fact that was explained by the climate.[6]

The period was one of superstition and credulity. Great reliance was placed in the efficacy of relics and images as means of salvation. One burgher was very proud of his 308 relics.[1] Cities were in continual strife in outbidding each other in efforts to obtain possession of relics. Aachen had a very famous collection which attracted pilgrims from all over Europe. Among the popular pilgrimages was that of children to Michaelsberg in Normandy, which was highly praised at the time. Many tales of miraculous cures of the sick, lame, and blind were circulated. Famines, droughts, and pestilences were met with masses and fasting. The eucharist was employed to work many miracles and at least one instance of the cure of lock-jaw was reported. Numerous were the tales circulated among the common people to satisfy the appetites of the credulous. In one district a fish was caught the size of a man, dressed and mitred like a bishop. It refused to answer any questions. When the king in anger was about to spear it, the bishops begged him not to harm it. Taken back to the water, it gave the king and his people a blessing and then disappeared. Fruit fell from the trees in the form of a perfect cross. Stones from a well having a holy name cured diseases. Christmas trees bore green fruit. A house in Luxemburg in which some holy wine had been spilled was cursed and burnt by unseen hands. A magistrate who sentenced an innocent man fell dead. Storms, strokes of lightning, droughts, disease, and all sorts of misfortunes were said to be punishments for sins. In 1432, three suns were seen in the sky, and when two of them disappeared, countless worms were seen on the snow. The Pope's death was foretold by a cross on the sun. Heavenly visions were very common, and witnessed by thousands.

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[1] Schultz, 441, 448, 493, 494.

[2] Ibid., 502.

[3] Ibid., 634.

[4] Pastor, v, 66.

[5] Kopelke, O., *Beiträge zur Geschichte der offentlichen Meinung über die Kirche in den deutschen Städten von* 1420–1560. Halle, 1910.

[6] Ibid., 22–3.

It was a common belief that certain persons were gifted with the power to foretell the future. Gypsy fortune tellers were numerous and widely patronized. Visions from heaven were almost countless, and dreams were regarded as having a prophetic significance. Both the Pope and the Emperor had their astrologers, and it was reported that Thomas Aquinas had discovered the true doctrines of the Church by that method. The prediction of death by some strange or unusual incident was common. Magic and the black art were universally accepted. Witches and hobgoblins were realities to the learned as well as the ignorant.[2] Comets, shooting stars, and other natural phenomena were all interpreted as portending some great good or evil. Prophesying was indulged in by all classes.[1]

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[1] Kopelke, 26.

[2] Ibid., 27–33.

Notwithstanding the ignorance and credulity abroad, the critical spirit had been released by the Renaissance and found expression among high and low. The common people were not slow in criticizing the Church and the clergy. They accused the priests of using the mass for getting money, and denounced their usury, unchastity, and shameless sins. Loud and incessant was the discontent, and open and pronounced the ridicule. "It is much worse in Christendom," said one, "than anyone would believe." Many of the people wanted their own church songs and their own service.[2]

The common people were very bitter against heretical sects like the Hussites and accused them of seeking fame and adherents for selfish purposes; said they were "damned enemies of God and Mary"; charged them with denying the holiness of Christ, and holding false doctrines; declared that they prayed to the devil; and denounced them as enemies of the king and secular authorities. Indeed, endless were the complaints against these "Enemies, unbelievers, the evil of Bohemia." Still the people at the same time realized that the Hussites were seeking a greater good not found in the Church and coupled their secession with the misdeeds of the Church. They asserted that the appearance of these heretics was due to the fact that the Church had not met its responsibilities in eliminating jealousy and hate, falsehood and unrighteousness, covetousness and unchastity, greed for indulgences and benefices, and ingratitude to God for all he had done for man. God had sent these wicked Hussites to punish the Church. Nider reported a sect of heretics in Swabia, who were very powerful, dangerous to the faithful, and obeyed neither the Pope nor any other shepherd. He intimated that the hypocrisy of the Church was responsible for their appearance. "Every heretic is a hypocrite; but not every hypocrite is a heretic." So common were the reports of fantastic appearances of the Bohemians in the sky by day and night that the people in city and country were in a state of fright. It was insisted that the causes for heresy should be removed from the Church. The death of the heretics would simply spread the sect, just as it would be ridiculous to throw stones in the water to quiet it. The burning of John Huss was denounced as an unrighteous act by some. Others held that the Hussite heresy was a thousand years old. On the other hand when the German reichstag announced the general duty of crushing the Hussites and when the Pope issued indulgences to all who assisted in that work, the people celebrated every victory over them with great jubilees in which they were called robbers, fiends, devils, raging lions, murderers, etc.[1]

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[1] Kopelke, 33–6.

[2] Ibid., 28.

173. *Attitude of National States towards the Church*

The political condition of Germany was one of confusion and ferment. The political machinery, resting upon the harmonious action of the Emperor and the Diet, was getting more and more out of joint. There were incessant quarrels between the two, and the states were becoming increasingly defiant. Princes were eager and ambitious to extend their power. The knights opposed the princes by forming strong leagues against them, and attempted to assert their former independence by plundering the peasants and tradesmen, as "robbers of gentle blood". The cities under the control of the burghers likewise resisted the princes, on the one hand, and fought the predatory knights, on the other. The latter, whenever caught, were strung up by the burghers.

The Church in France in the fifteenth century had partially recovered the wealth lost in the Hundred Years War and still held sway over the souls of men. The need of reformation was quite generally admitted and it was said that before the Church could completely regain its power it was necessary to end the scandalous greed and immorality of the clergy, to get honest and educated priests, to assail popular superstitions instead of perpetuating them, and to revive the works of Christian charity. The collation of benefices stood at the very head of the reforms needed; yet the Popes for selfish reasons refused to touch them. Constance and Basel had attempted to reform the evil by establishing the sovereignty of the general council, by diminishing the fiscal rights of the Holy See, and by restoring canonical elections. But unfortunately the king had destroyed all these gains.[2]

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[1] Kopelke, 38–47.

[2] Kehrmann, *Frauhreichs innere Kirchenpolitik*, 1378–1409. Leipzig, 1890. Gives an excellent discussion of earlier conditions.

Ferdinand of Naples also declared in 1494 that the Popes were responsible for all the "many misfortunes that have happened lately in Italy" and attributed these deplorable conditions to Papal ambitions.

The corruption of the Papal court was reflected in the moral weakness of Italy, where in the fifteenth century religion and morality suffered an almost complete divorce. With cynical effrontery the leaders of Christendom violated every tradition of Christ and the apostles to such an extent that their example became a justification of fraud, greed, lust, violence, and ungodliness to the whole Italian nation and to a considerable extent to all Europe. It must not be forgotten, however, that the contradiction between the lofty spiritual pretensions of the Popes and their worldly immorality did not assume such grave proportions to the men of that day as to us. The moral standards of that period were very different from ours. When conduct was controlled by æsthetic propriety rather than by a personal sense of righteous living, it did not seem anomalous to believe that the worst sinners might easily by means of short cuts make their peace with heaven.

Some of the most profound Italian thinkers clearly saw whither the corruptions within the Church were leading. Machiavelli, for instance, declared that if the Popes had lived and ruled in accordance with the teachings of the founder of Christianity, the states of Europe would have been far more united and much happier. The nearer one approached Rome, the less piety was found among the peoples. In contrasting the Church as he knew it with its "primitive constitution", Machiavelli asserted his conviction that "without doubt either ruin, or a scourge is now impending over it". He denied that the welfare of Italy depended upon the Roman Church because the degeneracy of the Papal court had resulted in Italy's losing "all piety and all religion"; in filling the land with "troubles and disorders"; and in inflicting upon the people disunion and corruption. The Roman Church was too weak to give Italy a strong, united, free government; and it was too strong to permit a rival secular ruler either within Italy or without to do so. Nor did the Pope, when in fear of losing his temporalities, hesitate to call in foreign potentates as counterpoises against powerful native princes. Thus France was used to humble Venice, and afterwards the Swiss were called in to drive out the French. Should the Papacy be sent to Switzerland, the Swiss would have the same experience as the Italians.[1]

Guicciardini, commenting on these words of Machiavelli, said: "It would be impossible to speak so ill of the Roman court, but that more abuse would be merited, seeing it is an infamy, an example of all the shames and scandals of the world." [2] He likewise believed that the Papacy had prevented the unification of Italy into one strong kingdom. As secretary and vicegerent of the Medicean Popes he knew as intimately as any man living the character of the Papal court. He frankly admitted that through the desire for his own aggrandizement he had laboured to extend the power of several Pontiffs, but at the same time he expressed his hatred of the "ambition, avarice, and effeminance of the priests" and regretted that his environment and interests would not permit him to strive like Martin Luther to have "that horde of villains reduced within due limits, and forced to live either without vices or without power".[3] These two men, Machiavelli and Guicciardini, were far removed from moral paragons and cared too much for the pleasure and profit they derived from the existing state of things to institute a revolution. Nor was any other Italian able to rise above the conception of a purely formal reformation. They wished to deprive the Pope of temporal sovereignty in order to suppress the worst scandals in the Papal court and to give peace and security to Italy. Savonarola, while desiring to purge the Church of sin, sought to preserve the hierarchy and dogmas inviolate. None of the Italians saw clearly that a fresh element of spiritual vitality was essential to the regeneration of society.[4] They dreaded heresy and hated innovations, and believed that to support the Church was an evidence of a refined taste. Besides, the Italians were so completely consumed by art, scholarship, philosophy and politics that little energy was left for the development of those spiritual forces that produced the northern Reformation. Their genius found its complete expression in the Renaissance and that movement was worldly and materialistic. They failed to perceive that a tremendous power antagonistic to medieval orthodoxy had been generated to hasten the liberation of the reason which they had begun. Moreover the political conditions in Italy were highly unfavourable to a profound religious reformation such as soon occurred in Germany, France, Switzerland, and England.

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[1] Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, i, cap. 12; *Ist orie Florentine*, i, cap. 9–25.

[2] *Opera Ined.*, i, 27.

[3] *Opera Ined. Ricordi*, No. 28.

[4] Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy, Age of Despots*, 454.

Yet at the same time nowhere in Europe were the shortcomings of the Church and the clergy so sarcastically and so wittily exposed. Where else can one find a parallel to Dante's fiery denunciations, Jacopone's threats, Petrarch's biting invectives, Joachim's prophecies, Boccaccio's scathing irony? Where else were the shameful scandals of the convents more generally exposed? Where else did the comic poets take more delight in ridiculing the gross manners of the monks and priests? Where else did the clergy themselves criticise their own colleagues? Poggio held benefices, Bandello was a Dominican, Bibbiena was a cardinal, Folengo was a Benedictine, and Berni was a canon. More than one Papal bull forbade the priests from keeping houses of ill repute or from serving as panders. Pius II said that if there were good reasons for enjoining celibacy on the clergy, there were far stronger arguments for insisting on their marriage.

While the Italians denounced the monks for their hypocrisy and immorality they scrambled to don the habit of the lay order of the Franciscans as the safest way to cheat the devil of his due. Corruption was so ingrained that it was treated with levity and roused no sincere and indignant reaction. The worldliness of Rome and the demoralization of the clergy stirred up wide criticism, but the very persons who uttered them were willing beneficiaries of the good things the Church had to bestow. Contempt was expressed for false miracles and spurious relics, for the mercenary traffic in indulgences, and for patent methods of salvation, but the people continued to make saints, to adore wonder-working shrines, and to profit by the spiritual advantages they brought. Popes canonized Italian saints. Innocent VIII consecrated a chapel for the lance of Longinus. The Venetian Senate offered 10,000 ducats for the seamless coat of Christ in 1455. All Italy was delighted with the information that the head of St Andrew had arrived at Patras in 1462, and the Pope and cardinals went out to meet it at Milvian Bridge, where Pius II pronounced a speech of welcome and Bessarion delivered an oration.

The Venetians jealously guarded the body of St Mark and the Neapolitans in a frenzy of excitement watched the liquefaction of the blood of St Januarius.

No inconsistency was seen in accepting or even purchasing spiritual benefits from a notoriously immoral and rapacious Pope, nor in believing that the penalty of hell rested in the mere word of a consecrated monster. The French soldiers who made Alexander VI tremble for his life one day, crowded around him the next and nearly suffocated him in attempting to kiss his mantle. Cellini called Pope Clement a "savage beast" and yet on his knees implored him to forgive him for murder and theft.[1] Girolamo Olgiato prayed to St Ambrose before he stabbed the Duke of Milan in St Stephen's Church. These illustrations help to explain why it was that the Church in spite of its corruptions and worldliness stood its ground and retained the respect of the people in Italy. To them it still represented the Christian truths. It still preached to them, taught them, ministered to the sick and dying, gave relief to the poor, maintained hospitals and orphanages, and stood forth as the hope of the age. In addition the material interests of the Italians were bound up with the prosperity and wealth of the Church. There were few families, high or low, who did not have one or more members serving the Church in some capacity, and hence who did not look to Rome for patronage, employment and honours. The entire nation had a peculiar and powerful pride in the Eternal City and the spiritual primacy of the Pope, hence they could not consider the suggestion of the dethronement of the Papal hierarchy. The impulse for the regeneration of Christendom was not to come from Italy, satisfied with the beauty of her art, preoccupied with her culture, proud of the Papacy as an Italian institution, and hardened to the infamy of its corruption, but from the barbarians of the north whom she had taught in their ignorance and now despised in their strength. The thunders of the Church, the ban and the interdict, and the power of the holy sacraments had not lost their power even in the north, much less among the Italians, who never dreamed of open rebellion, who enjoyed the fountain of apostolic privileges in their midst, and whose temperament inclined them to a more sensuous and less metaphysical conception of Christianity than the English and the Germans.

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[1] Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy, The Age of Despots*, 462.

Contemporary foreigners who visited Italy give us an interpretation of the people from another angle. Ascham wrote: "I was once in Italy myself; but I thank God my abode there was but nine days; and yet I saw in that little time, in one city, more liberty to sin than ever I heard tell of in our noble City of London in nine years. I saw it was there as free to sin, not only without all punishment, but also without any man's marking, as it is free in the City of London to choose without blame whether a man lust to wear shoe or pantocle."[1] Robert Greene declared that during his youthful travels in Italy he "saw and practised such villainy as is abominable to declare".[2] Howell cautioned travellers to Italy to beware for "she is able to turn a saint into a devil, and deprave the best natures, if one will abandon himself, and become a prey to dissolute courses and wantonnesse".[3] Rome with a population of only 60,000 had 6,800 public prostitutes, besides those who practised their trade under the cloak of concubinage.[4] Loyalty was a virtue little esteemed. Promises were lightly broken. Violence and crime and lawlessness in Rome under Innocent VIII made the city almost uninhabitable. Tom Coryate gave a vivid picture of the love, hatred, lust, splendour and luxury of Venice. Savonarola's sermons give the best picture of the state of morals in Florence. But Italian vices were coarsely sensual, although refined, artistic, and one might add spiritualized. They furnished the most important themes for poetry, prose, the drama and art. The gluttony and drunkenness of the northern nations disgusted the Italians, who practised a sobriety of appetite, a courtesy of behaviour, a cheerfulness of disposition, a refinement of sentiment and manners, and a liberal spirit of toleration which has no parallel elsewhere in Europe in that period. True piety was lacking; the old religion as a heart-force was dead; and there was no new religion to take its place.

174. *Summary*

The reformers before the sixteenth century were divided into three distinct groups or classes:—

1. The ecclesiastical reformers, who sought to work in strictly legal ways, who stood staunchly on the canon law,

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[1] *The Schoolmaster*, 87.

[2] *The Repentence of Robert Greene.*

[3] *Instructions for Foreign Travel.*

[4] Infessura, 1997.

who nevertheless wanted the whole Church reformed from top to bottom, and who advocated the theory of conciliar government and sought to reduce the authority of the Pope. Gelnhausen, Langenstein, D'Ailly, Gerson, and Clamanges were the leaders.

2. The pietists and quietists, who conformed to the requirements of the Church, or at least did not openly seek a rupture with the Church. They sought a purification of individual life in quiet ways and by peaceful methods of contemplation and helpfulness. The biographies of the early Greek ascetics stimulated within them a new interest and a new zeal. Jerome became a highly favoured saint. To grow into a consciousness of self-salvation was their chief concern. They opposed the evils of the Church but did little openly to combat them. They said little about the Babylonian Captivity and the Great Schism because they were chiefly concerned with higher things and consequently were indifferent to practical reforms.

3. The revolutionists, who anticipated nearly all of the reforms advocated by Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and other reformers of the Protestant movement. They attacked the very foundations of the Church and the Papacy and expressed open dissent from the Church's doctrinal teachings and the ritual—except the moral reformer, Savonarola. Chief among them were Marsiglio of Padua, John Jordan, Occam, Wiclif, Huss, Jerome of Prague, Wessel, Goch, and Wesel.

From the time of the Great Schism on there were pronounced and continuous efforts to reform the clergy and the monks. The evils and abuses were clearly seen and fully appreciated by all thinking men. Why, therefore, was the Church so helpless in its efforts to regenerate itself in order that it might retain unbroken its spiritual primacy in the world? There was no lack of information, for the very housetops were crying aloud for the correction of the wrongs of Christendom. There was no lack of adequate machinery, for there were the Popes with the thunders of their office, with their legates swarming over Europe, with God, the Bible, the fathers, the law and precedents galore to support them; there were the secular rulers of Europe ready and anxious to cooperate; there were the general councils and local synods to champion the cause; there were the higher clergy—archbishops, metropolitans, primates, abbots, bishops and deans—some of whom would gladly have aided in a sweeping reformation and others of whom might have been coerced into doing so ; and there were the common priests and monks and nuns who might have been swept up into a great passionate movement for regeneration by examples from above. In addition the scholars and institutions of learning in Europe would probably have heeded the call to mobilize for Christ had it been given with authority. But after the failure of the great reform councils, no summons was heard from those entrusted with leadership and the unofficial efforts to save the Church went unheeded until it was too late to save the unity of Roman Christendom. At this distance as one looks back in perspective the causes for the failure of the Church to meet the gigantic problem of preserving its own life and usefulness may be seen with great clearness :—

1. The Popes either through blindness to their opportunities, or through indifference to the obvious implications of spiritual leadership, or through the allurement of ambition for political power, or through fear of the loss of Papal prerogatives, entertained no sympathy for a thoroughgoing reformation of the Church in all its departments and institutions.

2. The vast majority of the clergy, high and low, spiritual and secular, either through a lack of genuine religious zeal, or through a failure to appreciate the duties of their high spiritual calling, or through the fear of the loss of certain material benefits and a latitudinarian mode of living, or through sheer inertia, closed both eyes and ears to the warnings for the necessity of reform.

3. The laity—rulers, scholars, burghers, and common people—although they bore the burden of the financial abuses and were keenly alive to other evils, yet they likewise enjoyed certain advantages from the outgrown system, and consequently felt that the initiative for reformation should come from those who were officially appointed to direct the affairs of the Church.

4. With the failure of the reform councils to inaugurate a new epoch in the life of the Church, there was no method by which all the various liberal individuals and groups, lay and clerical, could be organized into a powerful party under

capable leaders and with suitable means and authority to begin and to carry out a reform programme. Had the revolutionary theory of conciliar ecclesiastical government been adopted by the Church, as was urged in the Council of Constance, it is probable that the sixteenth century Reformation would have taken place within the Church instead of without it.

What the Church needed to shake it out of its deep-rooted self-complacency was a series of shocks such as the various reform movements from the north gave it—a mighty crisis which threatened its very life such as the Reformation in general forced it to face—and men with the apostolic zeal of martyrs like Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. After the appearance of these rebels the leaders of the Church awoke to its peril and sought to do in the way of reformation what it should have attempted heroically a century earlier.

From the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, the Church passed through an evolution that may be divided into three distinct parts. First, in the fourteenth century, came the mystical reformation which was an outgrowth of the best that was in monasticism, but it was too individualistic, too introspective, and lacked the ability to cope with a practical world full of sinful men. Suso was hyperascetic, Ruysbroek was positively ecstatic, and Kempis counselled sweet meditation and imitation. None of them would put a hand to a genuine reformation of the whole Church. The second movement was that of the humanists—Wesel, Rudolf Agricola, Wimpfeling, Erasmus, Reuchlin, and others. With the sharpest and keenest thrusts they criticized all the evils of both monasticism and the Church, but when it came to action they did nothing. They were negative rather than positive reformers. Among them all there was not one Luther. The third movement was the evangelical-reformatory movement of the sixteenth century, which wisely used the other two and waged an open war against not only abuses and evils but also the very foundations of the Papal hierarchy and the dogmas on which it rested. The only men in the earlier period who approached Luther were Wiclif and Huss.

Looking back at the period of European history from the Council of Basel to the appearance of Luther, one is struck forcibly with the fact that Europe was in the throes of a tremendous transition. A powerful revolution was in progress "producing startling contradictions and a seething unrest, in all relations in life, political, social, literary, æsthetical, and ecclesiastical, which announced the dawn of a new era." [1] On the one side, inventions and discoveries had opened up to the men of that day a new physical world with an invitation to conquer it; on the other side, the Renaissance had revealed a new intellectual world with undreamed-of possibilities and challenged men to enjoy it. Unfortunately the one pointed the way towards materialism, while the other led to the paganization of all the relations of life. The Christian Church should have been the powerful harmonizing influence, the mighty moral balance wheel, and should have utilized both discoveries for the usefulness and happiness of man and the glory of God, but instead it well-nigh surrendered its spiritual leadership to both influences.

The great Roman Catholic historian, Pastor, after a careful survey of all the forces at work within Christendom during the fifteenth century, sums up his study with these words: "The canker had gone very deep, not only in Italy, but also in nearly every other country in Christendom. Almost everywhere ecclesiastical life was full of abuses and evils, and the prestige of the Papacy was seriously shaken. In many directions masses of inflammable material lay heaped together, so that the slightest spark might at any moment set up a conflagration in which good and bad would be destroyed together. A catastrophe such as had been dreaded in the days of the Borgia, such as in many countries, especially Italy and Germany, had been announced in the form of terrible prophecies, or a schism, with which the Popes had been repeatedly threatened by the rulers of Spain, Germany and France, could be averted only by a fundamental reform in both head and members. Whether this would be possible was the important question on which the future of the Church and the world depended." [2]

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[1] Pastor, *History of the Popes*, v, 3.
[2] Ibid., v, 226.

CHAPTER XXVIII

SUMMARY OF THE FORCES THAT LED TO THE DECLINE OF THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

THE opening of the sixteenth century found Europe standing on the brink of a crater largely unconscious of the mighty eruption that was soon to change the entire course of modern civilization. True it is that for a century or more significant rumblings of impending dangers had been heard by many discerning men, but few if any actually realized the immediateness of the portentous disaster about to overwhelm the Medieval Church. "The Church had acquired so complete a control over the souls of men, its venerable antiquity and its majestic organization so filled the imagination, the service it had rendered seemed to call for such reverential gratitude, and its acknowledged claim to interpret the will of God to man rendered obedience so plain a duty, that the continuance of its power appeared to be an unchanging law of the universe, destined to operate throughout the limitless future."[1]

But as one carefully studies the history of the Church and of Europe during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the forces that undermined and finally led to the disruption of the Medieval Church may be clearly seen. These forces were not alone religious and ecclesiastical, but also political, social, economic and educational; and they were positive and constructive as well as negative and destructive. These forces have been discussed in detail throughout this volume and may be summarized here. Among the negative forces that were leading directly or indirectly to that series of revolts commonly called the Protestant Reformation were the following:

175. *The Negative Forces*

1. The logical development of the pretension of the Roman Papacy to the illimitable temporal as well as spiritual sovereignty led to open revolt. The failure of the progressive

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[1] *Cambridge Modern History*, i, 653 : "The Eve of the Reformation," by H. C. Lea.

party to secure a triumph for the conciliar theory of ecclesiastical polity in the councils of Constance and Basel had only strengthened Papal absolutism. France and Germany sought in vain to keep alive the idea of the superiority of general councils over the Pope. Pius II in addressing the French envoys at the conference of Mantua in 1459 plainly told them that his supremacy was irresponsible and could not be limited by either councils or princes. Nor did he hesitate to promise to appoint Mohammed II Emperor of Greece in case he should embrace Christianity. When King George of Bohemia insisted upon the fulfilment of the terms of the contract made at Basel with the Hussites, Paul II in 1465 summoned him to Rome for trial as a heretic and bestowed his crown upon Matthias of Hungary. As a result of the growth of Papal despotism, the secular rulers of Europe, conscious of the consolidation and growth of their secular authority, endured the Papal pretensions with more and more impatience. Their hostility was shown at first towards the Papal legates and nuncios. For instance Ferdinand and Isabel of Spain in 1478 asked the National Council of Seville how they could get rid of these Papal representatives who were inimical to royal authority. At the opening of the sixteenth century, the rulers of Europe were in a mood to encourage any movement that promised to curtail the Papal claim to temporal sovereignty over them.

2. The exercise of unlimited power of appointment to all ecclesiastical offices in Christendom by the Popes was another fruitful source of hostility on the part of secular authorities. This control of all patronage, first systematically asserted by Innocent III, gradually increased until John XXII in 1319 even assumed to himself the control of all prebends in every collegiate church. Finally it was asserted that the Holy See owned all benefices and filled them as a legitimate source of income, notwithstanding the rights of lay patrons and founders. Charles V of France asserted in 1385 that the cardinals had absorbed all preferments in the kingdom to the ruin of the Church. French prelates at the Council of Siena in 1423 declared that the curia sold all the benefices in France and thus reduced the churches to desolation. The head of the Cistercian Order complained in 1475 that all abbeys in France were held *in commendam*. Consequently, in self-defence France protected

her interest with the Pragmatic Sanction in 1438; England enacted the Statutes of Provisors and Praemunire; and Spain and Germany grumbled and attempted to retaliate. The most bitter quarrels ensued over the appointment of bishops, not alone in the kingdoms beyond the Alps, but also in the Italian cities. King Matthias of Hungary threatened to secede from the Catholic Church rather than surrender the right to appoint bishops. The Spanish rulers were equally obstinate and by the threat of appealing to a general council gained their point. In Germany the appointment of bishops was compromised. Venice stubbornly insisted upon her right to nominate the higher clergy. Whatever the outcome of this quarrel over patronage, the Church suffered because the ancient right of local election of well-qualified candidates was ignored, and the breach between the Church and State was widened.

3. The exemption of all ranks of the clergy from the authority of secular tribunals was regarded by the civil authorities as a grave abuse subversive of social order and justice. No difference whatever the crime, the clergy could be tried only in the spiritual courts. At the same time the ecclesiastical courts could pronounce no judgments of blood and were notoriously lenient towards clerical offenders. Conscious of this immunity, the clergy were more tempted to commit crime than otherwise would have been the case. Besides this freedom from punishment attracted to the lower orders of the clergy "numberless criminals and vagabonds, who were thus enabled to set the officers of justice at defiance".[1] The first claim of defence made by a thief or an assassin was "benefit of clergy" and a display of his tonsure. The vigilance of the episcopal courts in protecting these criminals not only impeded justice, but encouraged crime. The German Diet of Nuremberg in the Gravamina of 1522 declared that this clerical immunity was responsible for countless cases of adultery, robbery, counterfeiting, arson, murder, and false-witness; and asserted that unless the clergy were subjected to the secular courts there would be an outbreak of the people. Frequent efforts were made by the secular powers to remedy these evils. Sixtus IV in 1474 was compelled to compromise

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[1] *Cambridge Modern History*, i, 660. "The Eve of the Reformation," by H. C. Lea.

with Venice by permitting the numerous political offenders among the clergy to be tried in the secular court providing, however, that a vicar of the Patriarch of Aquileia should assist. When in 1478 two clerical assassins killed William de Medici and wounded Lorenzo, during the mass, thus adding sacrilege to murder, the enraged populace put the two assassins to death. This same Pope immediately complained that the liberties of the Church had been violated, and put Florence under the ban. But the interdict went unheeded, and a local council denounced the Pope as a servant of adulterers and the vicar of Satan.

To make matters worse, towards the end of the fifteenth century, an effort was made to extend Papal jurisdiction over the crimes of the laity as well. Since the thirteenth century the Papal penitentiary had been accustomed to administer absolution in "the forum of conscience" to all applicants. In the fourteenth century this came to be a source of profit to the Roman curia, with graded fees for the pardon of sins. When Ferdinand and Isabel began to employ the Inquisition in Castile in 1481, the Jewish converts to Christianity hurried in crowds to Rome to obtain absolution for whatever heretical crimes they might have committed. Even those who had been condemned secured letters setting aside their sentences. The Spanish sovereign, however, seeing prospective confiscations disappearing, refused to recognize the validity of these Papal briefs without royal approval. Sixtus IV obstinately insisted that his certificates of absolution must be received in all courts, secular as well as ecclesiastical. This assertion of an appellate jurisdiction over all the criminal tribunals of Christendom was a serious blow at the administration of justice everywhere. No wonder the mind of Europe revolted against this autocratic pretension.

4. The Papal claim, so vigorously set forth by Boniface VIII, that all ecclesiastical property was wholly exempt from secular taxation, was never surrendered. When it is remembered that about one-third of Europe was affected by this rule, it is realized how serious was the problem for the various civic governments. Consequently the opposition of the temporal rulers to this pretention increased as the era of the Reformation approached, and led to strained relations. Venice and Florence carried on prolonged conflicts with

Paul II over this question. The various national states regarded themselves less and less as mere portions of the great Christian commonwealth under the absolutism of the Pope and more and more objected to his interference in their political affairs. Louis XI of France in 1464 even forbade the publication of Papal bulls until they should have his approval, and Spain followed this example. This became, by the beginning of the sixteenth century, the fixed policy of all sovereigns strong enough to assert their independence.

5. With the triumph of Papal absolutism after the Great Schism and the Reform Councils, the Popes became mere secular princes, to whom religion was only an instrument for the accomplishment of worldly ends. The thunders of the Papal office, excommunication and the interdict, were hurled against hostile states for political effect. The Pope's supreme authority to bind and to loose was used to free himself from inconvenient compacts. The prerogatives of the Papal office were used to squeeze taxes out of Christendom. The disgraceful Pontiffs of the latter part of the fifteenth century devoted their time to diplomatic intrigues, the formation of advantageous alliances which were continually shifting, and to military enterprises like kings and emperors. An elective Papal monarchy prevented the cultivation of dynastic interests, it is true, but did not prevent the nepotism and favouritism which assured family prestige in wealth, office and advantageous marriages. It is no surprise to find the Papacy hated everywhere; to discover neither respect nor confidence but universal distrust; and to observe that the Pope's pretence for the welfare of Christendom was denounced as diplomatic hypocrisy. Pius II in 1462 said that the only way to convince Europe that he was sincere was to lead the proposed crusade against the Turks in person, for when he levied a tithe, the people appealed to a general council against it; whatever he did was attributed to greed for money; when he issued indulgences, he was accused of mercenary motives; no one trusted the Papal word; and he was without credit like a bankrupt trader. Examples in proof of his lamentation are almost innumerable. Thus the Diet of Frankfurt in 1454 and the congress of Mantua in 1459 asserted that the Papal purpose in levying a tithe for the Turkish war was only to get money. The German princes refused to allow the tithe to be collected in 1459 and the German

clergy in 1487 protested so vigorously that Innocent VIII abandoned the effort. Henry VII of England in 1500 permitted the tithe, but the French clergy refused to pay it and, although excommunicated, were upheld by the University of Paris. The severe indictment of Ulrich von Hutten addressed to Leo X in 1517 concerned itself wholly with the Papal abuse of power and said not a word about faith and doctrine. The evidence is pretty clear that, fundamentally, the revolt of Europe against the Roman Church was largely due to the secularization and worldliness of the Papacy.

6. The venality of the Pope and the curia was another source of bitter hostility. Through the exercise of the right of appointment the evil of pluralism assumed alarming proportions. Bishoprics and other benefices were showered on the cardinals and Papal favourites—the money went to Rome to the impoverishment of localities—and the necessary religious services were sadly neglected. Rodrigo Borgia accumulated benefices with an annual income of 70,000 ducats. Cardinal Julius della Rovere (Julius II) had one archbishopric, 7 bishoprics and 2 abbeys. Cardinal Piero Riario had bishoprics with an annual income of 66,000 ducats, and yet died in debt. Cardinal Jean of Lorraine owned 13 bishoprics and 9 abbeys. Pope Paul II possessed pearls worth 300,000 ducats, two tiaras valued at 300,000 ducats and gems estimated to be worth 1,000,000 ducats. Cibo, the son of Innocent VIII, lost 14,000 ducats in one evening to Cardinal Riario and 8,000 ducats to Cardinal Balue. An army of collectors was employed to gather the first fruits and other dues. Bankers collected the *annates* and indulgences. The Fuggers of Augsburg received fifty per cent for collections. Revenues were commonly farmed out. European princes were taken into partnership in raising money. Every community was overrun with pardon sellers. Countless dispensations were sold for all sorts of irregularities, even robbery and usury. The traffic in the sale of benefices and expectancies was enormous. Saleable offices continued to increase. Law-suits were made very lucrative to the Papal court. For example, in 1430 the Teutonic Order paid 14,000 ducats for a trivial case and it was reported that 6,000 more would be needed to secure a decision. Cardinals' hats were sold for large sums. Alexander Borgia in 1500 sold twelve for 120,000 ducats and in 1503

another lot brought 130,000 ducats. Both Julius II and Leo X made some of the cardinals pay heavily for their office. Alexander VI and Julius II bought the Papal office by bribery. And even the Emperor Maximilian sought a loan of 300,000 ducats from the Fuggers with which he hoped to add the Papal crown to the imperial. Conditions such as these were widely known in Europe and aroused open distrust and pronounced hostility.

7. The immorality and corruption of the clergy, which centred in Rome and spread the infection throughout Christendom, was the most potent factor in arousing popular hatred against the ecclesiastical leaders high and low. From the fourteenth century, when Petrarch exhausted his vocabulary in denouncing the abominations of the Papal Curia at Avignon, for the next two hundred years the cry for reform grew louder and more threatening. The Venetian ambassador in 1499 called Rome the sewer of the whole world. Machiavelli asserted that because of the Papal example all devotion and all religion had perished in Italy. Was it not well known that in Rome with a population of 100,000 there were 6,000 harlots? Did not Cardinal Borgia boast that God desired that sinners should not perish but live and pay? Burchard pictured a society in Rome too depraved to be ashamed of its own wickedness. It was the fashion for the clergy to have children like the Popes, and every priest had his concubine. Monasteries were little more than brothels. The confessor of the Hospital of San Giovanni in Laterano conspired with the attending physician to poison wealthy patients so that they could divide the money. He likewise deliberately murdered men in the streets and emptied their pockets until caught and hanged for the crime in 1500. The Bishop of Torcello in addressing the cardinals in 1458 as they were about to enter conclave to elect a new Pope said: " The morals of the clergy are corrupt, they have become an offence to the laity, all discipline is lost. From day to day the respect for the Church diminishes; the power of her censures is almost gone." The Bishop of Meaux in 1519 in his diocesan synod described the Church as a stronghold of vice, a city of refuge from transgression, where one might live in safety free from all fear of punishment.

The hatred of the people for the priesthood is shown in the fiery diatribes of the wandering piper, Hans Böheim, who professed to have revelations from the Virgin instructing him to tell the people that she could no longer endure the pride, avarice, and lust of the priests and monks, who would soon be destroyed unless they reformed their wicked ways. Tithes and tributes should be purely voluntary tolls, feudal dues and game laws should be abolished. Rome had no claim to the primacy of the Church; and purgatory was a myth. Thousands flocked to hear him before his death in 1476 at the hands of the Bishop of Würzburg. The Spanish Cortes manifested an uninterrupted hostility towards the Church as an engine of oppression, and an instrument of greed and injustice. The Franciscan, Thomas Murner, who later became a savage opponent of Luther, in his sermons of 1512 bitterly assailed all classes of the clergy as worldly, rapacious, and sensual. Bishops in need of funds extorted money from their priests for the privilege of keeping concubines. In the nunneries the sister who had the most children was made the abbess. If Christ himself were on earth, he would be betrayed, and Judas would be esteemed as an honest man. The devil rather than God ruled the Church. The priests were wily wolves who gathered the simple-minded geese about them and then ate them. In numerous poems, tracts, dialogues, sermons, and books these ideas were repeated, until Erasmus in 1502 said that so thoroughly did the laity dislike the priests that to call a man a cleric, or a priest, or a monk was an unpardonable insult.[1]

8. Pious devotion and spiritual worship had been displaced by blatant formalism. True repentance for sinful deeds, contrition of heart, prayer to God for forgiveness, and a godly life counted for less in the eyes of the Church than fastings, the mumbling of formal prayers, pilgrimages, observance of the rites of the Church, and the payment of money. In consequence religion and morality were divorced. Dogmas were ardently debated by those of the foulest life. Pius II said that the Franciscans were good theologians, but troubled themselves little about virtue and spirituality. The dread of hell was escaped not by repentance and a better life but by confession, absolution and indulgences. The saints were

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[1] *Cambridge Modern History*, i, 676. "The Eve of the Reformation." By H. C. Lea.

stoned and robbed, and then begged for blessings. Venice ignored the Papal interdict and then offered 10,000 ducats for the seamless coat of Christ. Siena and Perugia went to war over the wedding ring of the Virgin. The reverence for relics, the adoration of images, the enjoyment of gorgeous processions, and pilgrimages had replaced the ethical values of Christianity. Erasmus in 1502 had the boldness to protest against this new kind of Judaism that placed its reliance on observances, like magic rites, which drew men away from Christ. Again in 1519 in a letter to Cardinal Albrecht of Mainz, he declared that the Christian religion was degenerating into a more than Judaic formalism of ceremonies, and that there must be a change. When Pico addressed a memorial to Leo X in 1513 indicating the evils that needed correction, he mentioned the fact that the churches were held by pimps and catamites, the nunneries were dens of prostitution, justice was a matter of favour or hatred, all offices were bought and sold, and the revenues of the Church were used for illegitimate purposes, but his emphasis was placed on the fact that the worship of God was neglected, piety was lost in superstition and in consequence the people were being repelled from the type of religion preached to them by their pastors. In 1521 Cardinal Albrecht of Mainz wrote to the Pope that it was rare to find a single man in Germany who favoured the clergy. Savonarola asserted that the clergy had lost their faith in God and celebrated feasts of the devil. Under these conditions, it is not surprising that the masses of the laity were in a mood to give their support to any movement that would inaugurate fundamental changes in the Medieval Church.

9. The failure of those in charge of the Medieval Church to realize that a new age had dawned in Europe, when medieval ideas and institutions were being replaced by modern ideas and institutions, when people everywhere were beginning to demand the readjustment of all human relationships, and when the spirit of free inquiry and criticism began to make itself felt, resulted in the substitution of secular for ecclesiastical leadership. When the Medieval Church, through blindness, indifference, inability, and sheer inertia stubbornly refused to modernize itself to meet the new problems confronting it, the opportunity to direct the educational, social, political and religious life of Western Europe passed from its hands

for ever, and division and disaster overwhelmed it. The Popes and higher clergy in whose hands were placed the destinies of the Church obstinately refused to profit by the lessons so clearly taught by the Babylonian Captivity, the Great Schism, and the Reform Councils. Outward unity was restored by autocratic methods, but underneath were dangerous unrest and seething discontent. The reforms for which Europe had clamoured for three centuries were either ignored or rendered abortive. With the restoration of Papal autocracy in Martin V responsibility for a thorough-going reformation devolved upon the Papacy thereafter until the Council of Trent rendered nugatory the efforts of the earlier councils. To meet this responsibility successive Popes from Martin V to Leo X issued reformatory decrees, but their non-enforcement and non-observance only served to accentuate the wretched conditions in the Church. Julius II appointed a commission of eight cardinals to reform the curia and its officials, but its work came to naught. The Fifth Lateran Council called by Julius II in 1512, who died in 1513, sat under Leo X until 1517, but merely temporized with the serious problem of reformation. The serious disappointment of Europe arising from its dissolution without having accomplished anything worth while, undoubtedly contributed to the eagerness with which the Lutheran revolt was greeted by thoughtful men who were convinced that nothing short of open rebellion would put an end to the firmly entrenched evils. Alexander, the Papal nuncio, wrote from the Diet of Worms in 1521 that the priests were foremost in the revolt, simply because through Luther they hoped to show their hatred of Rome and that nine men out of ten favoured the Lutheran movement and the tenth longed for the destruction of the Roman curia.

176. *The Positive Forces*

Among the positive forces that were lessening the leadership of the Medieval Church and speeding its dissolution were the following :—

1. The spread of intelligence through the movements called the Renaissance and Humanism loosened the shackles which had bound the human intellect for centuries, and weakened the old reverence for authority. The consciousness of intellectual independence was awakened; men began to

think about things they had accepted as true without question; the spirit of inquiry was abroad; and methods of scientific investigation were employed. With the growth of knowledge and truth, there arose a popular movement of sufficient volume to break with the traditions of the past and to risk the dangers of rebellion for the sake of a new civilization. Out of this new atmosphere came a critical discussion of the very foundations of the Medieval Church that denied "the authenticity of the apostolic deposit on which had been erected the venerable and imposing structure of scholastic theology and Papal autocracy".[1] The very learning which the Popes patronized and made fashionable resulted in a revolt against their authority. In the face of the rigid dogmatism of the theologians there was a remarkably liberal latitude permissible in the discussion of theology and ecclesiastical polity. Nicholas V even authorized Manetti to make a new translation of the Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek. So long as the authority of the Papacy remained undisputed and the taxes flowed into the Papal treasury, there was little disposition to wage war on reformers and theorists. Savonarola went so far as to say that culture so completely possessed the leaders of the Church that they lost all religious piety, repudiated God, made fun of the holy mysteries, and celebrated feasts of the devil. A certain amount of heretical opinion was necessary as a qualification for entrance to the polite court circles of Leo X, although open heresy was frequently punished with severity.

The fruits of this new intellectual ferment were soon seen in the open attacks on the Medieval Church. Pedro de Osma denied the efficacy of indulgences, the divine origin and necessity of confession, and the infallibility and irresponsibility of the autocratic Papacy. The errors of this professor of Salamanca were condemned in the Council of Alcalá in 1479. John of Wesel, a professor in the University of Erfurt, rejected the traditions of the Fathers, carried predestination to the point where the control of the Church over salvation was repudiated, and even struck the word *Filioque* from the creed. He was forced to recant but his ideas spread rapidly. John Wessel of Groningen asserted that God deals directly with man and hence repudiated confession, absolution, indulgences, and purgatory, yet he died in 1489 greatly honoured.

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[1] *Cambridge Modern History*, i, 680.

Jean Laillier, in a doctor's dissertation, presented to the University of Paris in 1485, reduced the entire hierarchy to simple priesthood, and rejected the confessional, absolution, indulgences, fasting, celibacy, and the authority of tradition. Jean Vitier in a sermon preached in 1489 taught that it was a mortal sin to listen to the mass of an immoral priest, rejected the intercession of saints and denounced pardons and indulgences as the offspring of hell. Jean Langlois, a Paris priest in 1491, while celebrating mass, cast the consecrated elements on the floor and trampled on them to prove the falsity of transubstantiation. Aymon Picard in 1503 snatched the host from the hands of the priest and dashed it to the ground. Both these heretics suffered martyrdom rather than recant. When university teachers and priests dared to do and say these things, it is not surprising to detect a popular flood-tide of opposition arising to overwhelm the Medieval Church. The logical result of this hostility was expressed by Jacques Lefèvre in his *Commentary on the Pauline Epistles*, printed in 1512, in which he asserted the freedom of individual judgment as a matter of right. Both leaders and the occasion for an open breach were soon to appear.

2. The new political science occasioned by the rise of national states like France, England, and Spain struck a fatal blow at the Papal pretension to universal temporal rule. These attacks began in the quarrel between Philip IV and Boniface VIII, and increased in popularity until they resulted in national churches under secular jurisdiction in the period of the Reformation. Germany, Switzerland, England, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden declared their independence of Rome, and even in France and Spain, where the Reformation failed, the ruling monarchs sought to repudiate Papal imperialism. Those who assailed and cast aside the temporal claims of the Papacy found it but a short step to the rejection of the foundations upon which the Papal assumptions to universal spiritual authority rested. George Heimburg, a layman, devoted his life to asserting the superiority of secular over ecclesiastical power, and was found devoting his learning and eloquence to every anti-Papal movement from the time of the Council of Basel until his death in 1472. The demands for a new, modernized constitution for the Church, which culminated in the conciliar theory of ecclesiastical government,

were without doubt the direct outgrowth of these progressive political speculations. With the restoration of Papal autocracy in the election of Martin V, absolutism triumphed over the conciliar theory, but the deep-rooted suspicions aroused by the promulgation of that theory were not dissipated. It is apparent, therefore, that among the forces undermining the Medieval Church, the political influences were of no small consequence.

3. A truer and deeper type of spirituality was manifesting itself in numerous ways throughout Christendom. The Waldensians had not ceased to exist, and had spread their heretical ideas pretty well over Europe. The Fratricelli were discovered at Poli in 1466, and in Tuscany in 1471, and were reported as active in Germany by the Bishop of Ratisbon. The Maranyos in Spain caused considerable anxiety. The Beghards and Beguins were thriving in the Netherlands and in the Rhine valley. The Brethren of the Common Life had won fame for themselves, especially for their educational work, in northern Continental Europe. Even Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa inherited his pious enthusiasm from them and paved the way for the heresy of Giordano Bruno. *The Imitation of Christ* written by Thomas à Kempis was a little volume of gold and light that spread spiritual illumination throughout a dark, sinful world, after 1441 when it appeared. Cardinal Ximines in Spain was preaching a spiritual revival to save the Church. John of Goch, Wesel, and Gansfort were urging the doctrine of justification by faith and thus paving the way for Luther. Savonarola appeared in Italy with all the fiery zeal of an Old Testament prophet. The third Orders were multiplying and calling both men and women to lead a higher and purer life. Groups of mystics turned from the scandals of the Church, and the misuse of holy things to an inward vision of a holy life. Ruysbroek, Gerard Groot, and Florentius Radewyn combined pious meditation with the simple life and handicraft while urging the value of both sacred and secular studies. Thus thousands of men and women; priests, monks, nuns, and laymen; scholars and illiterates; representatives of every section of Western Europe, were teaching a new path to individual and social salvation. Some of them accepted the ecclesiastical hierarchy without any thought of repudiating its teachings, and were commended

by Popes and bishops. Others more radical and revolutionary, like John of Goch, John of Wesel, Gansfort of Groningen, sought to overthrow the entire sacerdotal and sacramental system of the hierarchy. Still others ran to strange heretical excesses of various sorts and were either excommunicated by the Church or burned as dangerous incendiaries. But all these individual mystics and reformers, and the groups of followers with whom they laboured and whom they inspired with a new vision, were in one way or another teaching the people of Europe to believe in a direct, immediate, individual contact with God—the great message which the humble Nazarene had given the world, but which the Medieval Church had well-nigh forgotten.[1] The moderate reformers spent their lives in attempting to make the practice of the clergy and laity harmonize with the high ideals inherited from the past. The progressive reformers preached justification by faith alone, the unprofitableness of Christian works and virtues, the right of free inquiry, and an appeal to the invisible tribunal—ideas that were abhorrent to the minds of true Catholics and anarchistic to the eyes of the Church. Demands for revolution in dogma came only from individuals, and nothing short of open secession could secure official sanction for such fundamentally necessary changes.

4. The invention of printing did much to popularize the humanistic movement, the new political science, and the teachings of the mystics. It was a fact of no small historical significance that the first printed book of any considerable size was the Bible in 1456, followed the next year by the earliest dated book, the famous Mainz Psalter. The first dated Bible appeared in 1462, and by 1500 no less than 98 distinct and full editions of the Latin Vulgate, besides 12 others containing the *Glossa Ordinaria*, were given to Europe. Between 1475 and 1500 in the city of Venice alone 22 complete impressions were made. Half a dozen folio editions came forth before a single Latin classic had been printed. German printers invaded all countries of Europe and by 1500 at least forty printing presses had been set up. Italy had a printing press as early as 1466 and in 1470 John Heynlin, rector of the University of Paris, had a press established within the walls

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[1] Langenberg, *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte der deutschen Mystik*, Bonn, 1901.

of the Sorbonne. Cloisters became the special home of the printing press and the friars turned printers, as for instance, Marienthal (1468), St Ulrich in Augsburg (1472), the Benedictines in Bamberg (1474), the Austin Hermits in Nuremberg, and the Minorites and Carthusians in Basel. The Brethren of the Common Life were particularly active in developing the new art. The public demanded books of a popular educational and religious character, such as grammars, the Latin classics, history, and above all devotional books and the Bible in the vernacular. The first German Bible was printed about 1466; two Italian translations were ready in 1471; the first French New Testament appeared at Lyons in 1477; the Old Testament in Dutch came out at Delft in 1477; the Low-German Bible was issued at Cologne in 1480; the first French Bible was printed in 1487, and went through sixteen editions; the Bohemian version belongs to 1488; the Spanish Bible was printed in 1478. Fourteen translations of the Vulgate into German and five into Low Dutch are known to have existed before Luther began his edition. Other religious books were printed by the thousands. It has been estimated that by 1500 the presses of Europe had printed no less than 8,000,000 volumes. Bookshops became common in all the cities of Europe and did a thriving business. Little popular religious guides like *The Imitation of Christ*, which ran through fifty-nine editions in fifty years, *The Gate of Heaven*, *The Path to Paradise*, and a hundred more, were very widely distributed and did much to keep alive in the hearts of the common people a high spiritual type of Christianity. The Papacy did not oppose the printing press any more than it did the arts, inventions and discoveries, nevertheless the printing press was causing widespread discontent with the Medieval Church in a thousand different ways, for it made the Bible an open book, it preserved and explained antiquity, it diffused intelligence, it enabled public opinion to form and to express itself, and it created compact parties of reform and opposition to Rome.

It did not take the Roman Papacy long to scent the potential dangers of the printing press. Sixtus IV as early as 1479 empowered the University of Cologne to proceed with censures against the printers, purchasers, and readers of heretical books. The Archbishop of Mainz in 1486 endeavoured to establish a crude censorship against the translations of the Bible and other books into the vernacular. Alexander VI took a more comprehensive step in 1501 when he said that many books and tracts being printed contained various errors and perverted doctrines and that therefore, in the future, no book was to be printed without preliminary examination and licence, while all existing books were to be inspected and those not approved given up for destruction. The Fifth Lateran Council adopted, with but one dissenting vote, a decree laid before it by Leo X, constituting the bishop of each diocese, in conjunction with the local Inquisitor, a board of censors of all books. Printers who disregarded their commands were threatened with excommunication, a fine of 100 ducats, and suspension from business.[1] These measures, which were the precursors of the Index, had little effect, however. When Luther's fateful theses appeared at Wittenburg in 1517, they were known throughout Germany in a fortnight and throughout all Europe within a month—a result impossible without the printing press. Cochleas complained that Luther's New Testament, printed in 1522, was eagerly purchased by persons in every station of life who regarded it as the fountain of truth and immediately began to dispute with the doctors of theology. Indeed it was a standing grievance of the Papal party that the printers eagerly printed and circulated everything on the Lutheran side, while the Catholics had great difficulty in putting their works before the public even at their own cost. This fact was due, no doubt, to the popular demand for the writings of the reformers, but not for those of the Papists. When the Edict of Worms in 1521 ordered all Luther's books to be given up to be burnt, the order only caused his works to be sought for more eagerly and at higher prices.

The fruits of the printing press focussed the minds of the people on doubts about the truth of scholastic theology and on the Papal autocracy as the sources of all the evils so generally and so grievously felt. Numberless associations, literary, artistic, religious and economic, sprang up chiefly in Teutonic lands to influence public opinion on the great questions of the day. Many of these societies were more or less secret and nearly all of them held ideas to a greater or less degree heretical. It was the printing-press, therefore, more than any other single force, that combined all the factors that rendered an explosion inevitable.[1]

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[1] Putnam, *The Censorship of the Church of Rome*, i, 108.

5. The economic and social transformations through which Europe was passing from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century were more vitally connected with the decline of the Medieval Church than has been commonly acknowledged. Medieval society was breaking up and the economic organization was in process of reconstruction on entirely different lines. There was not much change in the total volume of trade, but the methods of commercial practice had been fundamentally altered, and the institutions which controlled industrial activity had been remodelled. The processes of manufacture and agriculture remained almost the same, but a pronounced revolution in commerce had occurred. In consequence every aspect of economic life and every member of the economic field were radically transformed. Geographical discoveries had extended the area of trade to the entire world. The use of money had become more extended. The regulation of exchange and industry by towns in the medieval times was giving way to national regulation—a revolution that consisted of the rise of nationalities as the bases of industrial organization and commercial policy. As a result of these changes a capitalistic class arose and new methods for the employment of capital in new lines of commerce and in new branches of industry were discovered.

For example, the mineral resources of Germany and other countries were developed and exploited. The great increase of wealth in Germany excited the cupidity of the Roman curia and resulted in devising extortionate methods of obtaining money far beyond what was customary. In consequence the Papacy was denounced as a foreign power whose chief concern was to squeeze money out of Germany by all sorts of corrupt devices. Furthermore, the extensive mining enterprises withdrew a large number of labourers from the agricultural population. These new labourers in the mines were soon thrown into a state of grave discontent on account of low wages, while the farm hands reduced in numbers were forced to work harder than ever without increase in pay. The growth of the mining population greatly increased the demand for food products, as did also the development of cities. Landlords with prospects of large gains before their eyes threw the brunt for increased production on the diminished farm help. Rural conditions were further aggravated by pestilence and by the severe fish and game laws enacted by the avaricious nobility. The forests were cut down to supply the mines with timber and the cities with lumber and firewood. As a result many peasants fled to the cities to become artisans and day labourers, and those who were left behind became sullen, discontented, and ready to break out in open revolt against noble and bishop. Hence peasants, artisans, merchants, traders, nobles, and princes were united in resenting the extortions of the Papacy in financial matters.

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[1] Bücher, *Die Bevölkerung vom Frankfurt a. M. im* 14. *und* 15. *Jahrhundert,* Tübingen, 1886.

It was the combination of all these forces that produced the explosion that led to the greatest of all schisms in the Medieval Church. Through the Protestant Revolt resulted the various independent Churches of northern Europe. Through the Counter-Revolution was created the Roman Catholic Church which has come down to the present time. Protestantism began in Germany for the very simple reason that the ground was better prepared for it there than anywhere else by the deeper moral and religious earnestness of the people, and by social, economic, and educational conditions. So inveterate, so firmly entrenched, and so profitable were the abuses within the Medieval Church that the task of purification, reformation, and modernization was too great even for Papal omnipotence. With a monopoly of salvation in its hands the Medieval Church concerned itself only with obtaining the maximum of power and wealth. After Northern Europe had successfully seceded, and a large portion of the rest of the Continent hung trembling in the balance, the Council of Trent and later Pontiffs met the crisis by casting off the fetters that had brought dissolution.

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